

GOP says: Open the baths
OutRight says there's room for passion in compassionate conservatism.

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Despite God's advice
suspects plead not guilty in murder of Billy Jack Gaither.

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Cycling with Wagner
How 'The Ring' permeates SF popular culture.

see Arts section



BAY AREA REPORTER

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Wheels of Fortune, Part Seven

Devotion over dollars

by Jim Provenzano

It is called, in philanthropic terms, "adventure fundraising."

It seems that events that raise money must be entertaining, even at the expense of losing focus on the charity. The oft-repeated AIDS rider response that is meant to excuse multiple alleged and fined financial abuses: "It was a life-changing experience."

Surprisingly this phrase, like so many others, hasn't been trademarked by Pallotta TeamWorks, the for-profit company whose expenses at AIDS Rides in the last two years have been the subject of criticism from gay publications and cancer and AIDS groups nationwide.

But what makes AIDS riders defend their event by saying that it is "beyond dollars?"

To understand the faithful devotion, it is important to learn about the source of inspiration that even AIDS Ride founder Dan Pallotta has cited in publications where he deigned to be interviewed. It is called The Hunger Project, a creation worthy of comparison.

est-uary

Jack Rosenberg, born in the early 1930s, changed his name to Werner (as an homage to Werner Heisenberg, the physicist and philosopher) Hans (for Bishop Hans Lilje) Erhard (for economics minister and Chancellor Ludwig Erhard). After moving to the

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Charles Pierce dies at 76

by Peter Mintun



"Dead, you know"

'Male actress' Charles Pierce, a longtime San Francisco favorite, died in Southern California on Memorial Day. A memorial will be held at Forest Lawn Cemetery in Hollywood.

Drag entertainer Charles Pierce, the "Master and Mistress of Surprise or Disguise," died peacefully in his North Hollywood home on Monday evening, May 31. He had been battling cancer, complicated with a stroke. He was 76.

Pierce's career included acting and radio announcing, but it was as a female impersonator that he left his audiences weak with laughter, and brightened their lives with his wicked and sometimes irreverent impressions of film stars including Bette Davis, Joan Crawford, Tallulah Bankhead, Carol Channing, Katharine Hepburn, and even "Mrs. Olsen" of the Folgers coffee commercials.

During his illustrious career, Pierce was toasted by celebrities around the world, including Tommy Tune, Anita Loos, Beatrice Arthur, Eugenia Bankhead (the sister), the incomparable Hildegard (with whom he appeared at Town Hall in New York), and Stephen Sondheim. In the mid-1990s he retired, having lost his manager and dresser to the AIDS epidemic. He made a few appearances for special events, such as author/actor Charles Busch's highly successful Town Hall drag summit show in New York City, which featured Milton Berle and all the best drag acts. (Busch, who is working on a film, could not be reached for comment.) In the last couple of years, Charles gathered together all his scrapbooks, photographs, programs, recordings and videotapes and shipped them to the

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United Airlines, fundies lose suit against SF domestic partner law

by Cynthia Laird

San Francisco's landmark equal benefits ordinance withstood two legal challenges last Thursday, May 27 when a federal court judge upheld the ordinance in one case and ruled that United Airlines must provide no-cost benefits such as bereavement leave, family leave, and flight discounts for registered domestic partners of employees.

United and S.D. Myers, Inc. (SDMI), an Ohio-based company represented by Pat Robertson's American Center for Law and Justice (ACLJ), sued the city over the ordinance, which requires companies that do business with the city to offer the same benefits to domestic partners of employees that they offer to employees' spouses.

U.S. District Court Judge Claudia Wilken ruled in April 1998 that because airlines are federally regulated, they do not have to offer health and pension benefits. United, however, fought the ruling, arguing it shouldn't have to provide even no-cost benefits. In her decision last week, Wilken rejected that argument, but left in place a preliminary injunction preventing the city from enforcing the ordinance against the airline.

Dennis Aftergut, chief assistant city attorney, said if United keeps fighting the ordinance, the city will "vigorously oppose" the in-



MCC-SF's Reverend Jim Mitulski (left) congratulates Assistant City Attorney Dennis Aftergut and Equal Benefits Advocate's Jeff Sheehy during Sunday's church service.

junction remaining. It is not known whether the airline will appeal; the company has until Friday, June 4 to submit its motion. Federal Express, which joined United in the suit, also has until then to file court documents. In the case of Federal Express, Aftergut said other

no-cost benefits include sending flowers if a spouse dies, and package discounts.

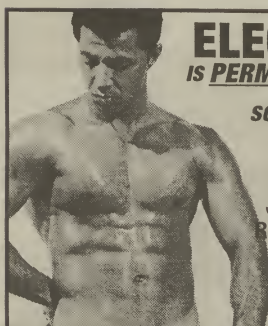
If United wants to keep its lease at San Francisco International Airport for an airfield building that houses its flight kitchen

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FIRST OF TWO SECTIONS




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Shepard's mom to Cal legislators: Pass Kuehl's bill

by M.R. Richards
B.A.R. Capitol
Correspondent

As Assembly Bill 222 fights for its life in Sacramento, struggling against unprecedented hate campaigns, the mother of murdered student Matthew Shepard has sent a plea that even the most hardened homophobes will have a hard time ignoring.

Judy Shepard is supporting AB 222, authored by Assemblywoman Sheila Kuehl, (D-Santa Monica). Kuehl's bill has been targeted by a vicious media campaign. The bill would add the words "sexual orientation" to the sections of the Education Code which protect students from other forms of discrimination. The current California Code states that every student has the right to educational opportunity without regard to "race, creed, color, religion, national origin, sex, or economic status" and AB 222 would merely add the words "sexual orientation" to that list.

There has been a hue and cry of outrage from the radical religious right, led by Lou Sheldon of

the Traditional Values Coalition, who is bombarding the airwaves and newspapers in marginal districts of newly elected Democrats. Phone banks, routing calls to legislators' district offices, have been traced as coming through Louisiana into California. Kuehl flatly stated that the "exaggeration and outright lies are taking advantage of people of faith by taking their money for this media campaign over two simple words."

The newly elected Democratic legislators have been inundated by calls and demonstrations in their home districts which have been so virulent that one legislator who has a gay son has even voted against the bill.

Judy Shepard, hearing of this, sent members of the State Assembly the following letter:

"Dear Member of the California State Assembly, Though I am not a California resident, I am writing to you as a mother who has lost her son due to anti-gay prejudice. It is my hope that you will seize the opportunity before you, in the form of AB 222, to help protect America's youth in public schools.

"It is no secret that teenagers are often incredibly cruel to peers

who are perceived as different. Whether the bullying is based on a child's disability, race, religion, or sexual orientation, it is inexcusable. Gay, lesbian and bisexual youth have historically been targets of school-yard abuse, both verbal and physical. It is time for parents, legislators, and community leaders to take the first steps toward protecting all of our children, as they strive each day to learn and grow.

"As you might know, my son Matthew was murdered last fall by two young men who spit anti-gay epithets at him, even as they beat him to death. If legislation such as AB 222 had existed in my home state of Wyoming, perhaps these troubled young men would have learned a fundamental respect for all people. Nothing will bring back Matthew, but this legislation has to power to spare any other parents from suffering as my husband and I have.

"As bias motivated hate-violence continues to escalate at an alarming rate, we as a community must come together and take immediate action. I implore you to support this legislation."

AB 222 is pending a vote on the Assembly floor. ▼

Leno's beer bust hearing postponed

by Mark Norby

Supervisor Mark Leno has had to postpone the June 3 hearing on beer busts and beer benefits, because the matter was not listed on the Small Business, Economic Vitality, and Consumer Services Committee's agenda in accordance with open meeting laws when it was approved by Supervisor Gavin Newsom's office; Newsom chairs the committee. The hearing has been moved to Thursday, June 17 at City Hall. The hearing will address the

state Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC) agency's action to close down beer busts and benefits at San Francisco gay bars, starting with the Lone Star Saloon. The benefits are designed to raise money for AIDS service organizations (ASOs). ABC targeted the events because they "promote uncontrolled drinking," according to Michael Tyrel of ABC. This statement has raised concern in the gay community that ABC is targeting gay bars in particular.

The ABC action calls into question citywide events where "host bars" and "open bars" are

part of the function. "Whether it's an event at the opera, or the Black and White Ball, or the Sheraton Hotel's unlimited champagne brunch," said Lone Star attorney Jeffrey Gibson, "it is the bartenders and waiters that serve the drinks, and not the ASO." Tyrel did not return calls asking for a clarification of the difference between the Black and White Ball and beer busts.

Lone Star's owner Kevin Owens and a large contingent of the bar's patrons are expected to be present at the hearing, which is open to the public. ▼

Mayor unveils \$4.2 billion spending plan

by Cynthia Laird

San Francisco's robust economy has led to flush city finances, Mayor Willie Brown told the Board of Supervisors Tuesday, June 1 when he presented his proposed \$4.2 billion budget for the 1999-2000 fiscal year that starts July 1. The board's finance committee will soon begin holding public hearings on the budget before it is finalized. This year's spending plan represents an increase of 7.7 percent over last year's budget, and includes a \$25 million general fund reserve.

The mayor, who plans to kick off his re-election bid June 12, told the supervisors that his proposed budget is again balanced. He stressed quality of life issues

such as increased police protection, and more money for parks and recreation during his address to the supervisors. The troubled Muni transportation system was also discussed by the mayor, who said his budget plan includes an additional \$15 million to reverse a decade of budget cuts and neglect. By the end of the year, Brown said 150 new trains and buses will be on city streets.

Brown's budget includes a 5.8 percent increase in the city's general fund to \$1.8 billion, up from \$1.7 billion last year. General fund dollars are used for a variety of city services, including public health. In terms of the Department of Public Health (DPH), Brown proposed a \$22 million increase for San Francisco General Hospital (SFGH) to replace lost

federal reimbursements and fund services for an increased hospital patient population. Another \$800,000 has been budgeted for improved staffing at SFGH's pharmacy, which experienced lengthy delays earlier this year after the satellite pharmacy was closed. Additionally, funding was continued for the city's work entry and re-entry program for people living with HIV/AIDS.

Another area of particular interest to the city's lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) community is the LGBT Community Center Project, for which the city has already allocated \$2.75 million. The mayor's proposed budget calls for another expenditure of \$3.2 million as the city's share to get the project completed by next year. ▼

LGBT programs get \$391K from SF Foundation

by Cynthia Laird

Bay Area lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) organizations got a boost last Wednesday, May 26 when the Gateway Initiative, a partnership between the San Francisco Foundation and the Horizons Foundation, announced grants totaling \$391,528 to 37 agencies to fund a variety of programs and services. A few non-gay groups received grant money for gay-specific programming, but mostly it was LGBT organizations that received the grants; the checks will go out in the next few weeks.

The Gateway Initiative is the Bay Area component of the National Lesbian and Gay Community Funding Partnership, a collaborative of funders interested in integrating issues of concern to the LGBT communities in philanthropic institutions nationally. The collaborative came together following a study by the Working Group on Gay and Lesbian Issues that showed that despite proven need in LGBT communities, less than .03 percent of all private, community, and corporate foundation dollars are being invested in the queer community.

In the first of two rounds of grantmaking to Bay Area organizations, the Gateway Initiative is providing grants to strengthen LGBT organizations' capacity and to develop programs in a variety of areas, including health, wellness, civil rights, education, and the arts. For many groups, these grants mark the first time they have received foundation funding.

Amy Schoenborn, coordinator for the initiative, told the *Bay Area Reporter* that the second round of grants will probably occur at the end of the year. The San Francisco Foundation anticipates requests for proposals being available in August or September.

Schoenborn, who's worked for two years developing the project, said part of her job involved creating opportunities for the San Francisco Foundation to get in touch with the LGBT community. "We've increased our grantmaking by 300 percent," she said, adding the foundation has used resources to create a bridge as well as educate local nonprofits about grants that may be available to them.

"The partnership between the San Francisco Foundation and the Horizons Foundation is an exciting opportunity to connect these important organizations to the funding community," said Dr. Sandra Hernandez, chief executive officer of the San Francisco Foundation. Hernandez, a Latina lesbian, was previously the city's health director.

There are several objectives of the initiative, one of which is to challenge the San Francisco Foundation to become more permanently responsive to the LGBT community, and to build long-term relationships with queer organizations. The community foundation was founded in 1948 and serves Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, San Francisco, and San Mateo counties. With assets of more than \$600 million, the organization is one of the largest community foundations in the country. Last year, foundation trustees awarded more than \$45 million in grants to 3,500 grantees.

Peter Teague, the openly gay executive director of the Horizons Foundation, said the significance of his organization's partnership with the San Francisco Foundation is "that it opens the door of mainstream funding to more LGBT organizations than ever before." The Horizons Foundation was started in 1979, and is a grant-making organization.

In addition to the two foundations, an advisory committee of 25 people involved in the LGBT and philanthropic communities have worked to implement the initiative. Schoenborn said there are many reasons to fund gay and lesbian issues, including the fact that discrimination continues to exist against the LGBT community. Even in San Francisco, generally considered by many to have a tolerant attitude toward gays, there were 415 hate crimes reported to Community United Against Violence in 1996, with 96 percent of the incidents involving a weapon. In 1998, there were 434 hate crimes reported to the agency, which received \$15,000 through the Gateway Initiative.

Other organizations that received strategic partnership grants include the LGBT Community Center Project, which received \$20,000; Gay and Lesbian Historical Society, \$15,000; Harvey Milk Institute, \$20,000; Lavender Youth Recreation and Information Center, \$10,000; Pacific Center for Human Growth, \$25,000; Rainbow Community Center of Contra Costa County, \$14,000; Sexual Minority Alliance of Alameda County, \$15,000; and Spectrum Center in Marin County, \$15,000.

Many other groups received grants for LGBT program development. They are: Afro Solo, \$10,000; Asian Women's Shelter, \$11,000; Black Gay Letters and Arts Movement, \$5,000; Catholic Charities of the East Bay, \$3,000; Center for Human Development, \$2,500; Children of Lesbians and Gays Everywhere, \$10,000; Dimensions Health Services for LGBT Youth, \$15,000; Frameline,



Dr. Sandra Hernandez

\$5,000; FTM International, \$8,000; Gay Asian Pacific Alliance, \$5,000; Gay-Straight Alliance Network, \$10,000; Girls, Inc. of Alameda County, \$7,000; Himaphilic Productions, \$5,000; La Pena Cultural Center, \$3,000; Lesbian and Gay Dance Festival, \$10,000; Lesbian and Gay Senior Services Collaborative, \$13,000; Luna Sea, \$9,600; Magic Theatre, \$10,000; New Leaf Services for Our Community, \$13,000; NIA Collective, \$13,000; Project FOCYS of San Mateo County, \$5,000; Q-Spirit, \$5,000; Queer Cultural Center, \$10,000; Queer Latina/o Artists Coalition, \$5,000; Queer Youth Empowerment Project of the Redwood City Youth Health Center, \$10,000; Queer Youth Training Collaborative, \$15,000; Women's Cancer Resource Center, \$14,428; and Xanthos, Inc., \$10,000.

In addition to the San Francisco Foundation and the Horizons Foundation, the initiative is supported by the California Wellness Foundation, the Evelyn and Walter Haas, Jr. Fund, the Chevron Foundation, the Wood/Kaufman Family Fund of the San Francisco Foundation, and the Gerbode Foundation. ▼

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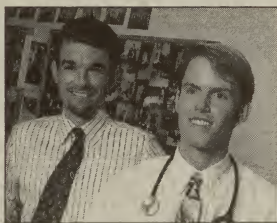
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Help lift tumblers of Cheer sky-high

by Mike Salinas

Many people say they would bend over backwards for the community. One group is notable for proving it. The bouncy pouncy cheerleading tumblers known as Cheer San Francisco will soon enter their 20th year of performing in the Bay Area, although not always under that name.

Formerly called the Raw Raahs, the group is notable for performing dazzling aerial acrobatics at parades and celebrations, and is best known for assembling a dizzying human pyramid that always inspires spectators to roar their approval. And although such daring precision may look impossible, members of Cheer SF say it's within the grasp of most people with a positive attitude. They're so sure, they'll offer two workshops in July to community members who'd like to learn how.

Team Captain Steve Burke told the *Bay Area Reporter* that group members will lead workshops in July to teach the basic skills of cheerleading, and then will audition prospective members in the middle of the month. "People shouldn't get too concerned about that word 'audition,' though," he said. "We'll teach a short routine and then they'll come back and show us what they've learned."

He also said that the team is looking for people with all levels of tumbling ability, as long as they all have a high level of dedication. "It's not only skill and talent," he said. "It's more important to have a good attitude, to be committed. We ask new members for a year's commitment if possible, practicing one day a week, and of course on performance days."

The precision that comes with weekly practice is easily apparent at Cheer's many appearances each year, the next of which will be tonight (Thursday, June 3) at the spring championship game of the gay men's basketball league.

On Saturday, Cheer will join the SF Lesbian and Gay Freedom Band (and other performing arts



Cheer San Francisco

groups) at Yerba Buena Gardens, located at 701 Mission Street, to salute the Jon Sims Center for the Performing Arts. The next day they'll show their feats in Santa Cruz, performing for the eighth consecutive year at the Santa Cruz Pride Parade and Festival.

Next weekend, Cheer will appear in the Sacramento Pride Festival on Saturday, June 12.

As always, Cheer will also flip and tumble down Market Street in San Francisco's pride march later this month, and will need volunteers to help make it possible. Volunteers — perhaps future members — will be called upon both to assist during the parade and to staff the fundraising booth during the accompanying celebration.

Fundraisers are important, according to Burke, because the team travels so much. Last year the group went to Amsterdam, and next year members will head to Hawaii. In some cases, members have come to the aid of other team members. "The team comes together to help anyone who's having financial problems," he said. "We depend on each other on the ground, so we want to make sure everyone gets on the plane."

Ironically, that mirrors the situation in the human pyramid, where the "flyers" (those on the top) are supported by the "bases."

"We try not to call them 'tops' and 'bottoms,'" Burke said, "but we do sometimes. We have a lot of fun."

He also says it's great for physical conditioning. "Over time we see people who come in with no skills, who have no background in cheerleading, and watch them develop. In six months to a year they can be one of our top performers."

But although Cheer is a group where it's literally possible to work your way from the bottom of the heap to the top, it's more likely for some than others.

"I'll never be a flyer," Burke said. "I weigh 185 pounds. That's always a consideration."

"I'm one of those guys who helps others rise to their heights." ▼

Cheer workshops will be held from noon to 3 p.m. Sunday, July 11 and Saturday, July 17 at Justin Herman Plaza Park, located at Embarcadero and Market, at Head Over Heels Gym, located at 1250 45th Street in Emeryville, from 8 to 10 p.m. Tuesday, July 13. Auditions will be Sunday, July 18 at the Jon Sims Center, located at 1519 Mission Street in San Francisco, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. For further information, visit www.cheersf.org or call (415) 995-2195.

SFAF hears critics, AIDS info at meeting

by Cynthia Laird

No one was arrested or escorted out of the conference room at the San Francisco AIDS Foundation's (SFAF) board meeting last Thursday, May 27, and after a couple of activists voiced their displeasure at Executive Director Pat Christen, the meeting settled down and board members and guests heard thorough presentations by SFAF staff on a variety of topics associated with the epidemic.

Approximately a dozen of SFAF's 19 board members attended. Only four speakers showed up of the six who signed up for four minutes to address the board. Photographs and recording devices were not allowed at the meeting.

First up was *Bay Area Reporter* news editor Mike Salinas, who suggested board members "break the silence," quoting from Christen's op-ed piece in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, if they were pri-

vately unhappy with the practice of awarding double-digit raises to SFAF executives.

AIDS activist Michael Petrelis was next; he had wanted to offer Christen a handful of bread crumbs, but alert security people prevented that from happening. As a person with AIDS in San Francisco, Petrelis said, "All I get are crumbs." He said plans are in the works for a picnic in front of Christen's East Bay home some Sunday afternoon. "We hope

you'll talk to us and end the silence," he said.

Next, AIDS dissident David Pasquarelli criticized Christen's guest opinion piece, in which she discussed the need for gay men to communicate with respect to sexual encounters and the conflicts that arise over disclosing one's HIV status.

"You are reviled in the gay community," Pasquarelli said. "You have no right to speak about

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Corrections

In "Women's Motorcycle Contingent on a roll," in the May 27 *Bay Area Reporter*, the phone number for volunteers to call was incorrect; the number is (415) 789-8254.

In last week's "Wheels of Fortune, Part 6 Lost and foundation" the \$1 million reported to be spent by the San Francisco AIDS Foundation on lobbying in 1997 is incorrect; that amount represents the maximum SFAF could spend on lobbying. The actual amount spent was \$205,817, as reported in the 1997-98 IRS 990 form. Additionally, former SFAF staffer Amber Fields was not a social worker, she worked as a receptionist. Finally, Rene Durazzo, who is heterosexual, is SFAF's director of programs. A gay man, Joe Headlee, actually runs SFAF's Gay Life program. We regret the errors.

'The Magic of Oaxaca' Mexican art auction tonight benefits AIDS

by Cynthia Laird

An auction of fine Mexican art takes place tonight (Thursday, June 3) at the Bucheon Gallery, to benefit the *Frente Común Contra el SIDA* (the Common Front Against AIDS) of Oaxaca, Mexico. The art preview takes place today from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m. at the gallery, located at 540 Hayes Street, at Gough, and people are welcome to stop by and take a look.

Entitled "The Magic of Oaxaca," the auction will feature a large selection of outstanding contemporary Oaxacan art, donated by nearly 40 artists. Proceeds from the event will help with AIDS education and prevention programs in the community that is located about 250 miles south of Mexico City.

"Oaxacan art has been said to contain 'the essence of Mexico,'" said Russell Ellison, art coordinator for the event. "Artists such as Rufino Tamayo, Francisco Toledo, and Rubén Leyva have created a new artistic language, using their unique heritage to communicate their special vision. In much of this art is balanced the intellectual, the mythological, and the spiritual, which is one of the reasons Oaxacan art is so attractive to collectors today."

For years, the broad plateau of the Oaxaca Valley has been producing some of the most interesting and arresting art in Mexico. Today, Oaxacan art is increasingly commanding attention by serious collectors and Oaxacan artists are admired around the world.

Admission to the event is \$20 per person; that includes a raffle ticket for the prize of a 10-day vacation for two in Oaxaca, including round trip air fare, accommo-



Dino Castro and Tom Ammiano display artwork by Oaxacan artist Rodolfo Morales.

dations at Casa Colonial, and cooking and colonial tours. The prize will be awarded at the event. Drinks and food from Oaxaca will be served, including a specially imported mescal.

According to Bill Wolf, general coordinator of the *Frente Común*, "The number of reported AIDS cases has increased over 280 percent in the last five years alone. The *Frente's* current activities are expanding into the training of teachers in indigenous languages of the state, help for new AIDS groups, and increasingly, direct support for persons living with HIV/AIDS."

Wolf added that the organization is experiencing an economic crisis. "The expenditures of the *Frente* have begun to outstrip the income of the *Frente*. The organization could be facing a reduction in our programs of considerable proportion."

"We're saying, this cannot happen," said Michele Burton, one of the Friends of the *Frente Común*, a new committee in San Francisco that includes Board of Supervi-

sors President Tom Ammiano; Supervisors Mark Leno, Sue Bierman, and Alicia Becerril; Mayor Willie Brown; state Senator John Burton; and gay businessmen Jim Hormel and Bob Ross, publisher of the *Bay Area Reporter*.

"We hope everyone can come to the auction, have a wonderful time, and support this important cause," Michele Burton added. ▼

The auction takes place from 6 to 9 p.m. For more information, call Bucheon Gallery at (415) 863-2891 or Jane Swinerton at (415) 922-1148.

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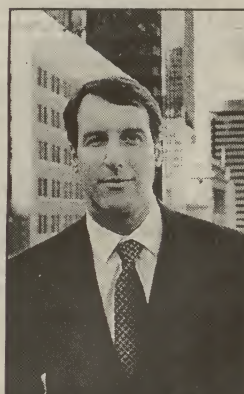
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Malaysian 'Gay & Lesbian Extravaganza' Saturday

by Mark Norby

The Malaysian Gay and Lesbian Club (MGLC) of San Francisco will host its 1999 Malaysian Gay and Lesbian Extravaganza Saturday, June 5 at 7 p.m. at the Harvey Milk Civil Rights Academy. The party will feature fine Malaysian cuisine, "mind-blowing" entertainment, gorgeous Malaysian divas, and a raffle for fabulous prizes.

"The event is a fundraiser so that we can continue to provide assistance for our members in seeking gay-related resources about Malaysia as well as those in the United States," says Rob Tan of the MGLC office in San Francisco.

MGLC is especially pleased to hold the event in light of the recent selection of *Trikone* magazine as the best newcomer by New California Media. *Trikone* is the lesbian, gay, and bisexual monthly dedicated to queer South Asians.

The MGLC is a local and national organization for Malaysian gays, lesbians, and transgenders providing a safe, friendly environ-



Trikone editor Sandip Roy

ment welcoming individuals from all cultural backgrounds. ▼

Tickets to the event are \$20 in advance, or \$25 at the door and are available by calling Rob Tan at (415) 584-1534. The Harvey Milk Civil Rights Academy is located at 4235 19th Street @ Diamond in the Castro. MGLC can be reached at suara@hotmail.com.



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OPEN FORUM

Times and tides

The frigid weather that plagued us in May shows no sign of relenting, leading to some crankiness. Just as we started to get persnickety about it ourselves, we saw a homeless man who frequently spends his days wandering Market Street with his belongings in two suitcases. It made us remember Rudyard Kipling's line, "I cried because I had no shoes and then I met a man who had no feet." Meaning: as cold as we may get, it could only be worse without a warm place to sleep, to relax, even to go to the bathroom.

We ache for the homeless, a population that has seen no visible decrease during this mayoral administration, even though the economy is reportedly improving nationally, statewide, and citywide. It would seem that the old saying about a rising tide lifting all boats is wrong. Sometimes rising tides just drown people.

Property owners seem delighted about the rising real estate market in Northern California, but anyone who thinks their housing investment will make them rich should think again. Everybody who tries to cash in their home to get a fat return will just have to spend it all on another house that someone else is making a fat return on, or move elsewhere. That, of course, would put them in the same league as the homeless, a group that Mayor Brown has already suggested needs to relocate to more affordable areas.

Last week at the San Francisco AIDS Foundation board meeting, staffers estimated 2,000 additional beds are needed to meet housing needs for people living with HIV/AIDS. The sooner that need is met, the better. Too many people who should be addressing it creatively — from city lawmakers to nonprofit groups — just wring their hands and complain that *something must be done*.

That's not good enough. They have those jobs, after all, because they are perceived to be creative enough to figure out some solutions. *Solve something.*

Speaking of the SFAF board meeting, we were surprised to see so few attendees last Thursday. That board has ladled out annual raises to the executive director averaging more than 16 percent each year for nine years, four times what the average American receives, but the largesse has gone all but unchallenged by this community, which largely funds those increases. We're not sure

if everyone else in the gay Mecca was too busy Thursday — tabulating their real estate increases, or huddling over their iMacs cruising people on the Internet that they wouldn't be caught dead talking to in person — but the community was, in Grace Slick's great phrase, conspicuous by its absence.

We hope to see a better turnout for the meeting on bathhouses tonight (Thursday, June 3) at 5:30 at Mission High School, 3750 18th Street. No matter what your opinion is, this is an issue that warrants community response.

See you there. ▼



Editorial



Spermatophobia

by Robert Kim, Staff Attorney, American Civil Liberties Union of Northern California; Jennifer Pittman, Policy & Program Associate, Gay and Lesbian Medical Association; Leland Traiman, R.N./F.N.P., Executive Director, Rainbow Flag Health Services & Sperm Bank; Kate Kendell, Esq., Executive Director, National Center for Lesbian Rights; and Maura Riodon, Executive Director, Sperm Bank of California

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is trying to prevent gay men from having children.

At its Human Issue Seminar on April 8, 1999, the FDA announced proposed regulations that would make it illegal for gay men to be sperm donors, block medical assistance for infertility, and almost eliminate the possibility of having biological children. Outlining the regulations was the FDA's chief architect of the proposal, Ruth Solomon, M.D., director of the Human Tissue Program, Office of Blood and Research and Review, Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research (CBER) of the FDA.

The regulations, due to be finalized by the end of 1999, will do two things. First, gay men would be banned from being anonymous sperm donors. Under these regulations heterosexual men may have multiple sexual partners and be acceptable. However, gay men in a long-term mutually monogamous relationship would not. Current fertility industry standards require anonymous sperm donations to be frozen and quarantined for six months, then donors are retested for HIV before their sperm is released for inseminations. The HIV window period — the time after infection until an HIV antibody test is positive — is one to three months. In 14 years of using the HIV antibody test, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) could only point to one case of a man who ap-

peared healthy and went beyond this window period. He did not turn positive for two years. He was heterosexual and specialized tests conclusively showed he was infected by his wife who was infected by an extra-marital relationship. (*Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report* 1996; 45: 181-185). In light of the effective screening procedures already in place and because there is no scientific or medical basis for excluding gay donors, such as ban would be discrimination.

Secondly, it would force directed donors, men who wish to father children with a woman they already know, to freeze their sperm, quarantine it for six months and be retested for HIV before their sperm is used for insemination. Given the fact that only one out of six men (16 percent) have sperm that survives the freezing process well enough to meet the World Health Organization's minimum standard of fertility, this second rule will effectively prevent 84 percent of gay men from the possibility of having children. The only way that some of these 84 percent who have minimal survival after freezing may use their sperm is by expensive and invasive high tech fertility methods. The price for these methods range up to \$12,000 per attempt with very low success rates. Health insurance rarely covers this and most will not have the money for such expensive and otherwise unnecessary procedures.

The FDA denies they are discriminating on the basis of sexual orientation. They do acknowledge that they exclude "men who have had sex with other men [MSM] in the last five years." A standard response is, "Now, that does not discriminate against gay men *per se*, but I can see how someone might interpret it that way."

On May 7, 1996 Tom Spira, M.D., assistant chief for medical science for the CDC, said "I would not, categorically, want to exclude them [gay men] since we have appropriate testing. If you do so, I believe, you gain a false sense of security." Charles Schable, chief of the AIDS Diagnostic Labora-

tory at the CDC, said, "If one is freezing the sperm and retesting the donor after six months the only reason to apply that criterion [MSM] to semen donors is homophobia." Both men stressed that they were speaking for themselves and not the CDC, as the CDC has a policy advising against gay donors (MSM). Letters from the CDC admit they have no scientific evidence to support their policy but are simply following the "advice of a consultant panel."

The FDA does not have to come up with new sperm banking regulations at all. A California Health Department subcommittee has completed work on proposed regulations, not yet enacted, which follows scientific evidence, protects public health, and does not discriminate. California has already enacted a Health and Safety Code (Division 2 - Chapter 4.2 Section 1644.5), which specifically allows the use

of fresh or frozen sperm for directed donation as long as the donor has been appropriately screened and the woman has been appropriately counseled about her risks. These two documents are a package that insures both our health and our rights. Dr. Solomon ignored the "California Plan" in devising the FDA's regulations.

The FDA's regulations would override California laws and would be a program of mass sterilization by regulation. They will deprive lesbians of the choice of having children with gay men. Banning gay men from being donors perpetuates the myth that AIDS is a gay disease. To protest these proposed regulations and to support the "California Plan," please call toll-free 1-877-696-6775 or write to the Department of Health and Human Services which oversees both the FDA and the CDC:

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Please send us a copy of your letters at leland@gayspermbank.com. ▼



Guest Opinion

LETTERS

We reserve the right to serve refuge...

As the service provider for the EVRC temporary shelter, the Ark of Refuge would like to thank the *Bay Area Reporter* for its fair and thorough coverage of this special project. In addition, our thanks to Wayne Friday and Supervisor Leno for their acknowledgments of some of the many generous, caring community members who made this first-of-its-kind in San Francisco program targeting homeless LGBTQ young adults a far greater success than we could have imagined when we accepted the charge to administer the shelter.

We also would like to take this opportunity to address Andrew Bertagnoli's diatribe against Supervisor Katz and the shelter in the May 20 *B.A.R.* We find it very interesting that Mr. Bertagnoli never raised any of his concerns during the run of the shelter itself. In fact, throughout the entire shelter project neither the Ark nor LYRIC received a single complaint from the neighborhood, while Supervisor Katz's office and the specially designated emergency pager for the SF Street Patrol registered a total of four calls regarding disturbances, only one of which could be directly linked to shelter clients. Similarly, police logs for that period of time showed an actual decline in the number of incident reports for the 10-week shelter run (Mr. Bertagnoli wrongly states that problems were associated with the shelter for "the past four months"). Clearly, the provision of a safe, secure, stabilizing space was beneficial to the immediate neighborhood as well as to the clients themselves.

Mr. Bertagnoli also accuses Katz of narrow mindedness in not addressing the complexity of issues which young homeless adults face. However, the Ark and outreach workers from other organizations - working closely with Katz's office - succeeded in providing counseling and referral services to clients which resulted in 33 documented clients achieving multiple successes such as securing new jobs, entering new housing opportunities, and accessing other detox treatment and/or substantial primary medical services. In addition, 158 seven- and 14-day contracts were formed with clients, all of which required that the clients achieve a practical self-enhancement goal such as getting an HIV test, signing up for GED, or contacting a vocational counselor. Mr. Bertagnoli also claims that "now kids from all over the U.S. have been appearing at EVRC." Yet demographic studies of shelter clients showed that these young adults either were in San Francisco already or en route to the city seeking escape from destructive life circumstances when the shelter opened. The shelter housed 157 clients in total, but neither neighbors, merchants, nor the police noticed an increase in loitering and/or panhandling in the Castro as a result. Similarly, there has been no evidence since the shelter closed to back up Mr. Bertagnoli's claim that "the homeless problem in the Castro is about to go from bad to worse." The problem certainly still exists city-wide, but this powerful model of compassionate and effective intervention has proven emphatically to be both appropriate and necessary for such a highly challenged population. Accordingly, the Ark thanks Supervisor Katz for her leadership around the EVRC shelter, and we look forward to working with the Board of Supervisors and the mayor to secure long-term funding for permanent LGBTQ shelter in the city so that all homeless LGBTQ young adults can experience the enduring support of a community that truly cares enough to take care of its own just as much now as it ever has before.

Eric Politzer, Shelter Project Manager
Reverend Yvette Flunder, Executive Director
Ark of Refuge, Inc.
San Francisco

Change and changelings

Right about this time last year, the merchants in the Castro had signs up saying "Make change, don't give change" (or something to that effect) and it appeared to be working. For the first time in about three years, I could actually walk down Castro and be panhandler-free. Friends from out of town enjoyed the Castro again.

I'm in the Castro frequently and couldn't imagine why, within the past few months, the panhandlers are out in full force. From becoming a relatively quiet street (for Castro, that is) the street has become a war zone of sorts. I asked a few people who were begging for cigarettes, dope or "whatever" where they came from and each one said they "live" on Collingwood.

Does anyone have any clue as to when this "temporary" shelter is supposed to close?

Is anyone from this shelter monitoring the whereabouts of their "clients" or is it just assumed that, when they leave in the morning, they'll walk a block away and squat in a doorway for the rest of the day?

Bob Streiff
San Francisco

[Editor's note: It's closed now. You didn't notice?]

Not in my three or four block radius!

Cynthia Laird's complete lack of objectivity in her May 27 article concerning the homeless shelter at the Eureka Valley Recreation Center is astonishing. Nowhere in her story does she mention the significant problems attributed to the shelter, problems eloquently summarized by Andrew Bertagnoli's May 20 letter to the *B.A.R.* Nor does she mention the increase in vagrancy along 18th Street that followed the opening of the EVRC to the homeless. Dr. Bertagnoli's letter makes it clear that the few individuals who may have benefited from being housed at EVRC did so at a great cost to the residents along Collingwood Street.

Although she forced the neighborhood to accept housing homeless at the EVRC despite strenuous objections, Supervisor Katz is to be commended for honoring her commitment to close it May 16. Those who believe the shelter should be reopened (they are a vocal minority) should be willing to hold a special election so registered voters who reside within a three or four block radius of the EVRC can decide if this is an appropriate use of the facility or if they want ongoing housing for vagrants in the community.

Robert W. Melbourne
San Francisco

More than just a shelter

As one of the initial proponents for the temporary queer youth shelter at the Eureka Valley Recreation Center (EVRC), I can emphatically and proudly say I was overwhelmed with the success of this first-ever shelter program focusing on helping and supporting homeless queer youth. Though no program is perfect, this shelter exceeded expectations.

To respond to Mr. Bertagnoli's letter in the *B.A.R.* accusing me of not responding to individuals concerned about the shelter, my office, along with Supervisor Leno, shelter staff, staff from the Ark of Refuge such as Eric Politzer, staff from the SF Patrol Special Police such as Jane Warner, Castro merchants such as Morgan Gorrone, staff at Metropolitan Community Church (MCC) such as Reverend Penny Nixon, staff at LYRIC such as Brian Cheu, staff at EVRC such as Nancy Dito, and a myriad of community members were all integral and consistent participants in the shelter. Mr. Bertagnoli never attempted to contact anyone associated with the shelter after his one appearance at the February 4 MUMC meeting.

We not only had another community meeting later in February to address community concerns about the shelter, but our office and the SF Patrol Special Police contacted those residents and merchants who had strong concerns about the shelter throughout the months it was open to hear their concerns as the shelter progressed. We had multiple meetings scheduled with different community groups and organizations while the shelter was open, all of which were canceled because of the little negative impact the shelter had on the Castro and surrounding area.

In addition, Mr. Bertagnoli accuses Supervisor Leno and me of not mentioning the problems associated with the shelter, problems that were not mentioned because our offices and the SF Patrol Special Police received only one complaint during the duration of the shelter that could be linked to its clients. One complaint, rapidly dealt with, is a small price to pay for providing shelter for over 150 youth and helping over 30 youth achieve multiple successes.

Also, the shelter was not only a place for youth to sleep. Through the outreach provided every week at the shelter, from groups such as Guerrero House, Central City/Hospitality House, Dimensions Clinic and Haight-Ashbury Free Clinic to name a few, many young adults found permanent or transitional housing, found jobs, accessed health services and detox programs, accessed educational programs and reconnected with their families. In addition, MCC generously provided space to serve both breakfast and dinner. At every meal, two volunteers from the community served food and sat and talked to the youth.

Those young adults who have not yet found housing or employment have been encouraged to continue their relationships with LYRIC and EVRC staff, to access day programs at LYRIC and EVRC, and to attend the Simply Supper program at MCC. In addition, the plans for the permanent young adult shelter are being finalized this summer.

Though Mr. Bertagnoli paints a picture of anarchy on the steps of EVRC, there is absolutely no evidence to support his claims that youth are loitering and being belligerent in front of EVRC all day.

I am thrilled that this venture was such an unqualified success. The shelter became a model of community and city cooperation and I am proud to have been a part of its opening and to have worked with such extraordinary community leaders and volunteers. I am deeply committed to continuing to work with community members to support the homeless youth in our community.

Leslie R. Katz
San Francisco Board of Supervisors

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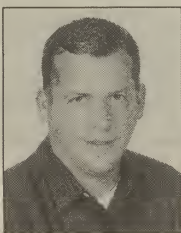
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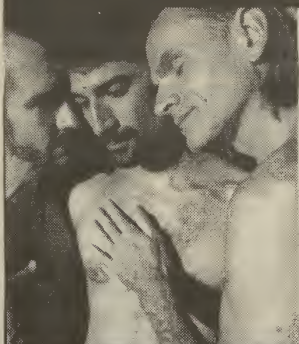
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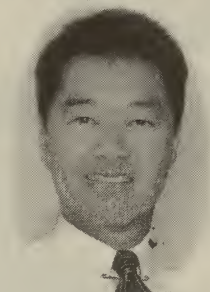
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Dissing the dissidents

I do not have links to the health professions, pharmaceutical interests, AIDS organizations or other similar motives for writing, but I have always been fascinated by the irrational. How do the proponents of "AIDS-as-a-lifestyle-disorder" dismiss the ravages of HIV in populations whose only risks were transfusions, infected partners, needle pricks, or breast feeding? What were the lifestyle excesses of the faithful wives, the nuns, the hemophiliacs, and the little kids who succumbed to AIDS? What were the hedonistic practices of Ryan White, or the thousands of East Europeans children infected by inoculations from re-used needles?

What twisted reasoning causes anyone to cite the decline in U.S. AIDS cases as proof that there is "no epidemic," or that HIV does not cause AIDS?

And why do so, knowing that this virus - in the countries where cases are declining - has been fought with the most comprehensive prevention efforts ever undertaken? And what can prompt people who deny the validity of rigorous investigation, in hundreds of independent studies, to accept at face value the "official" statistics of poor nations in which medical facilities and reliable case reporting are all but non-existent? (And how, for that matter, has the disease appeared at all in simple rural villages with conservative social mores, that were light years away from the supposedly debauched ways of the industrialized world?)

Social historians have alluded to numerous periods of license and promiscuity in this history of nations, and report the prevalence of sexually transmitted diseases, but until the emergence of human immunodeficiency virus - perhaps from the forests of central Africa - there is no record of what we know as AIDS.

In the simplest terms, virtually everyone infected with HIV, barring successful intervention, is subject to the rare and defining viral, fungal and bacterial illnesses associated with it, and virtually no one free of the virus will experience the same ranges of exotic illnesses. Even with due respect for those who disagree, I can only suggest that the denial of HIV in AIDS is a more baffling sickness than AIDS itself.

Name withheld upon request
San Francisco

Dissidents dis back

Finding contradiction where there is only advocacy, befuddled by p.c. thinking, unable to broach the subject of science, the membership of ACT UP/Golden Gate remind me of a cage full of squawking parrots ["An ad morition," *Mailstrom*, May 20.] "HIV Reproduction," "the HIV virus," mindlessly parroting pharmaceutical brochures and refusing to read the label's side effects. ACT UP/Golden Gate is unable to discuss the subject at hand relying instead on a litany of falsehoods. Last March in the *Journal of American Medical Association*, none other than Paul Volberding stated that any long term effects of protease regimes are not advisable and cautioned against them. ACT UP/Golden Gate doesn't even bother to read their own authorities. There is no discussion about those on the drug regimes suffering from strokes at the age of twenty-something, crix belly, and other metabolic horrors. I read on the front page of the B.A.R. "It's official: Stress gives HIVers AIDS," something ACT UP/SF has been saying for years and is in complete accordance with our position concerning medical marijuana. Bombarded with misinformation, handed a death sentence, subjected to psychological brainwashing, stigmatized to the point of criminality, anyone designated HIV-positive is well deserving of a token of some high grade bud. In the meantime there is no argument: *HIV does not cause AIDS*. We trust the public enough to believe that once informed they can come to their own conclusions.

As to the accusation of being "right-wing" we of ACT UP/SF have to laugh. We are communists, anarchists, gay liberationists, poets, painters, artists, animal rights activists, tree-huggers, we even count a sur-realist in our group, but we are not, nor will we ever be, right wing, an accusation that attests to the intellectual poverty of our opponents.

Make no mistake about it, ACT UP/SF's position with regards to ending AIDS is simple, direct and to the point. The lessons of AIDS are sociological not medical. In terms of services there is enough for everyone. If we move to slash the military budget we can have universal health care for all. Nothing less can end the misery and marginalization that is the condition known as AIDS. Our message continues to make right wingers, drug treatment advocates, and AIDS Industry executives turn green with horror.

Finally, with regards to the issue of accountability, whatever finances have been used to launch our ad campaign, you can be sure it wasn't with Ryan White Care Act funds. Nor will any of us be buying a house in the Oakland Hills from money meant for the HIV-positive. When it comes to the issues, we insist, our enemies continue to be our best argument.

Ronnie Burk
San Francisco

And now, a word from a GHB expert

The lead story of the May 27 issue of the B.A.R. concerning the recent death of Skylar Ringland due to mixing alcohol with GHB includes inaccurate information, albeit spoken by friends of Ms. Ringland, about what one should and should not do when consuming GHB. I have served as a consultant for several studies on GHB, and am currently conducting a study of the gay-male circuit parties (including material on GHB usage), and it concerns me that the gay press should make more of an effort to report accurate information concerning GHB. For instance, the idea that you cannot allow someone to fall asleep on GHB is simply not correct. I don't want to recount all of the hundreds of sources of empirical data that I have gathered about GHB here, but I do want to encourage you, especially if the B.A.R. is interested in reducing the number of GHB/alcohol related deaths, to do a story where accurate, judicious, and thorough reporting occurs about GHB. Whether one likes it or not, GHB is here to stay, and we must come up with strategies to reduce the potential harmful effects of its misuse within the rave, club, and circuit scenes.

Christopher Carrington Ph.D.
Department of Sociology
Program in Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Studies
San Francisco State University

GH-be careful

Ingesting large amounts of water with GHB does not necessarily make it safe. Overdose is still possible. The single most important fact about GHB is its sharp dose/response curve - so people used to feeling a buzz after one beer can drink two more and feel about 50 percent more intoxicated. They can drink even two more and still be standing. If you rapidly ingest two grams of GHB and feel buzzed and then think you can double or quadruple that as you would beer, your friends will find you unconscious no matter how much water you drank.

The advice not to let someone suffering acute GHB intoxication sleep is also not very useful. They'll pass out even if you yell at them, throw water in their face, or give them smelling salts. It's better to remain calm, place them on their stomach or side so the victim won't choke on his or her own vomit, and get medical attention.

GHB is not a killer drug. More people have died from alcohol and probably aspirin this year than from GHB alone. Because GHB does not affect respiration as adversely as alcohol or opiates, people who overdose on GHB by using it irresponsibly often regain consciousness safely and without a hangover. This is much like the effect of large doses of Kava in Polynesian Kava ceremonies where very large doses cause a very deep, dreamless sleep that ends without next day effects.

Joe Tucker
San Francisco

[We agree that education is better than abolition. We got our information from poison control, the police, the medical examiner, and GHB users, and suggested lying victims on their sides, both in the story about Ringland and in our April 21 story, "SFPD's GHB warning: turn victims on their sides." Our objective, as Dr. Carrington put it, is to come up with strategies to reduce the potential harmful effects of its misuse.]

And now, a word from a pot expert...

Beneath the hype and gaudy of now-trendy marijuana lies a simple truth. This stuff should have never been made illegal. Most of us know that. A large percent of our elected officials have some clue as to their constituents' change of perception.

Local laws banning medical use and possession fall like bricks from the Berlin Wall. The federal government looks on, guarding the "old way" like cement lions at the front door. Where do we go from here?

We have to recognize change does not come easy. It is a personal affront to the way things have "always" been. Fear of the unknown is understandable - it's dark out there in the woods, especially without a road map! But we do have each other, and like it or not that's how we're suppose to operate on this planet. That's why it's so small and we're so many. Everything goes haywire when we live contrary to our nature. Taken a good look around lately?

Cannabis. Marijuana. Hemp. Pot. Call it what you will, there are valid reasons for this plant's existence. We can't simply eradicate it like we do every other being which gets in the way of our bright ideas. We've got to change our M.O.! Humans can't continue to be arrogant, self serving creatures. We are members of a bio-society. Hasn't Public TV taught us anything?

This is our moment of epiphany. We have the opportunity to transcend to our next-highest level of experience by simply opening our minds.

It'll be okay. Honest. And remember - cannabis is not evil. Hypocrisy is.

Randelyn C. Webster
San Francisco

GOP hopefuls to take on George "Junior" Bush

by Wayne Friday

Texas Governor **George W. Bush**, heretofore very quiet on issues while stockpiling millions of dollars in campaign funds for a presidential run, is about to finally come out of the Texas (yellow) Rose Garden. He has been able to hide out in Austin and wriggle out of taking a stand on such issues as Kosovo, abortion, gay rights, the GOP-favored national flat tax, and guns, using the excuse that he has been busy with the "business of running the Lone Star State." That will come to a screeching halt when the Texas Legislature adjourns this month, and he will now be forced to join the fray whether he likes the idea or not.

And what kind of "welcome to the club" will he likely get from his fellow candidates? Well, former Vice President **Dan Quayle** says about him that he thinks "there is more hype than hope"; perennial Republican presidential aspirant **Patrick Buchanan** says he can hardly wait to see "if Junior can take a punch"; **Elizabeth Dole** says that he "cannot hide behind his father's famous name" much longer; **Steve Forbes**, the multimillionaire publisher and GOP hopeful in 1996, says he is ready to spend up to \$10 million of his personal fortune in television ads alone to get out his message and to "force" out Bush's message; far right candidate **Gary Bauer**, the darling of the anti-abortion Republicans, is itching to "see what he is all about"; and even Arizona Senator **John McCain** is jabbing at him for his silence on the war in Yugoslavia. Oh, and for those people who care about what former Tennessee Governor **Lamar Alexander** has to say, he referred to Bush as a "strong, but untested" candidate. (Ouch! Fighting words!)

"Untested" is only part of the problem. "Inconsistent" is the other. Take guns: Bush will tell those who wish to hear it that he is for instant checks at gun shows, but he let the Texas Legislature, which he controls, allow the issue to die; he also recently — quietly — signed into a law allowing private citizens to carry concealed handguns. Bush also says he supports legislation making it tough on those who commit hate crimes, but doesn't think gays and lesbians should be covered by such a law.

Bush also tries to please both sides on the hot-button issue of abortion: last month he told conservative supporters that while he favors a constitutional amendment to make it illegal, his fellow Americans "hearts are not right" on the issue, and too many voters oppose such an amendment so there is "no sense" in pushing for it. On affirmative action the Texas governor also conveniently comes down on both sides, telling reporters that "I'm for affirmative access; I think the state ought to do everything in its power to provide equal opportunity for all." He quickly added, however, that "I think all quotas put one group of people against another."

On the international front, Bush criticized President **Bill Clinton** for taking a ground invasion of

Kosovo off the table (although the president is seemingly about to change his mind on this), but dodged the question of whether he would deploy ground troops if he were in charge, saying, "That's dependent upon what my military advisors would tell me."

Bush has become so adept at double-speaking on most issues that his Republican opponents have publicly taken to referring to his positions as "Bushspeak." And make no mistake: Buchanan, Dole, Bauer, McCain, et al., are all awaiting their chance to take on the Teflon Texan.

When he hits the political campaign trail later this month in places like New Hampshire, Iowa, and even California, he can be sure that he will be tested and

tried — hard — not by **Al Gore** and the Democrats, but by those within his own party who have been waiting for him to emerge and prove that he can "take a punch."

Indeed, many within the Republican Party, while smiling now that George W. leads the probable Democratic nominee Gore in all polls, fear that the anointed, but untested, likely Republican nominee's political star has possibly risen too fast. "Once Junior leaves Texas and faces up to the likes of Pat Buchanan, John McCain, and Steve Forbes, it's a new ballgame and this can eventually only benefit Al Gore," worries one California House member already on the Bush bandwagon.

Politics and people

Mayor **Willie Brown** will officially kick-off his re-election campaign at Yerba Buena Center on Saturday, June 12 at noon. The mayor's friends believe the event will bring out hundreds of supporters. (Call 503-1999 for info.)

Meanwhile, former Assistant District Attorney **Steven Castleman**'s friends tell me he is "very seriously" considering a run for **Terence Hallinan**'s job; one well-known attorney familiar with the Hall of Justice scene (and who supported Hallinan the last time, incidentally) says that "Steve shouldn't be underestimated — he's got the means and the determination to really fight it out with Terence."

CBS's famous anchor **Dan Rather** — who asked **Hillary Rodham Clinton** point-blank during an interview last week, "Why are you still with that man?" — will appear at a book-signing this Saturday, June 5, at Book Passage in Corte Madera (927-0960 for info.) Rather's book: *Deadlines and Deadlines: Essays Written at the Turn of the Century* (William Morrow) is sure to be a bestseller; he is the third network news anchor (NBC's Tom Brokaw and ABC's Peter Jennings were the others) to appear at the Corte Madera bookstore in recent months.

Political observers in Sacramento are still buzzing over the way Lieutenant Governor **Cruz Bustamante** was almost entirely shut out of meetings and arrangements with Mexico's President **Ernesto Zedillo** during the Mexican leader's recent visit; Governor **Gray Davis** and his supporters are still reportedly seething over the way Bustamante publicly

attacked the governor over the Proposition 187 appeal.

Term limits are once again showing their limitations: while legislators should be putting their noses to the grindstone and doing their jobs, they are forced to worry about their next campaigns and where they will land politically. Instead of allowing officeholders to build up seniority, power, and stature, term limits have literally forced many to compete against each other for new seats in order to stay in public office; many good legislators are being "termed out," like Democratic Assemblywoman **Sheila Kuehl** of Santa Monica who will now face a strong primary race against another incumbent Democrat assemblymember for the state Senate seat of longtime gay rights supporter **Tom Hayden** (also a victim of term limits).



Christine Kehoe

Incidentally, a reader from the southland e-mailed that I failed to mention San Diego Councilmember **Christine Kehoe** in a recent column about gay and lesbian candidates. Kehoe is already running a very strong campaign in the 76th Assembly District where the incumbent, **Susan Davis**, a longtime friend of the gay and lesbian community, is also "termed out" and will be a candidate for the House of Representatives in the San Diego area's 49th District. (Got all that? Whew. And phew and foey, too!)

In Nevada, Governor **Kenny Quinn**, the first Republican governor there in nearly two decades, says he will sign a bill to prohibit job discrimination against gays; 10 states, including California, have similar laws and don't we wish the GOP had more governors like Quinn?

Show Biz: — a friend sent notice that famed high diver-turned-actor **Greg Louganis** opened recently in a production of **Larry Kramer**'s 1988 farce *Just Say No* at Chicago's Bailiwick Repertory; it's part of the Pride '99 fete, and the Olympic gold medalist plays a president's gay son, who moves to the city to become a ballet dancer.

Here in the Bay Area we're looking forward to the special *Beach Blanket Babylon*'s 21st Silver Anniversary Celebration show at Club Fugazi Monday, June 7. It will feature Senator **Dianne Feinstein** as Snow White, former Secretary of State **George Shultz** (now a San Franciscan) as Superman, and appearances by Don Johnson, Mayor Willie Brown and **Danielle Steele** (**Sharon Stone** and **Robin Williams** will also be there). You can reportedly still get tickets, at prices ranging from \$300 to \$1,000 — I know it's expensive but it all goes to charity and you really don't want to miss Willie trying to upstage Dianne and George — so call (415) 421-4222 for tickets. ▼



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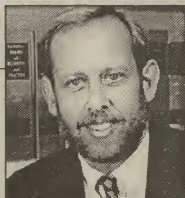
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Open the baths – it's the 'right' thing to do

by Dale Carpenter

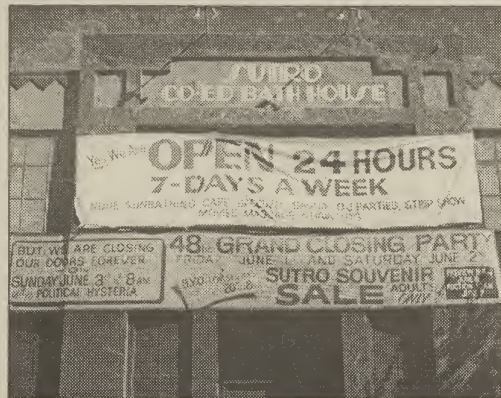
It's time to open the baths, San Francisco, and treat adults like adults. And let the rest of the gay civil rights movement take note: we will not win our freedom within a framework of big-government politics.

For most of recorded history, government has obsessed on the question of what people should and should not be allowed to do with their genitalia. This old debate is now centered, oddly enough, on the famously tolerant but government-soaked city of San Francisco. A loosely organized group of activists has been trying unsuccessfully for years to get the city's public health authorities to reopen bathhouses – private businesses where patrons may go to have sex in locked rooms.

San Francisco's bathhouses were closed by city health officials in the mid-1980s amid a public frenzy over what to do to prevent the spread of AIDS. Ironically, the same officials have allowed regulated "sex clubs" to remain open on the theory that sex in these establishments takes place in common areas and thus can be monitored to ensure that patrons are doing it safely.

The problem for gay civil rights advocates is that the debate over reopening the bathhouses has focused almost exclusively on what constitutes the best state-sponsored HIV-prevention strategy – rather than steering toward a more general discussion on the proper role of government in regulating consensual sexual behavior among adults.

So we have the spectacle of progressive pro-bathhouse ac-



Time has passed. The hysteria hasn't.

tivists arguing to liberal public health bureaucrats that allowing gay men (and we're talking almost exclusively about men here) to go into private rooms, lock the doors, exclude monitors, and have at it will not increase HIV infection rates. This argument has the merit of being creative. It has the political demerit of being (a) counterintuitive and (b) unprovable. Not surprisingly, government coercion is winning and freedom is losing.

When the terms of debate are monopolized by an argument about which government policy will or will not provide the greatest protection from the consequences of human freedom, the result will be a public policy that curtails that freedom as much as is politically feasible. That has been the predictable conclusion of San Francisco's health authorities, whose chief interest is not the maximization of individual liberty but the protection of their own regulatory fiefdoms.

How about arguing, instead, that the government and its legion of do-gooders have no business telling adults they can't have sex with each other behind closed doors? It is, after all, the central principle behind the successful efforts in this century to get rid of laws forbidding contraceptives, birth control clinics, interracial marriage, and sodomy. In each case, government invaded individual freedom to prohibit some activity it considered a threat to public safety or morals. The justifications for these regulations were exposed as shams. The means used to protect us were judged as inconsistent with individual autonomy.

Like other attempts by government to run people's lives, San Francisco's ban on bathhouses curtails liberty in whimsical ways. Forget the theories. In practice, despite sporadic monitoring, you can go to a sex club or a bar or a bookstore in the city and have unsafe sex, but not to a "bathhouse." You can drive 15 minutes across a bridge to a bathhouse in a different city, but not to one 15 minutes across the same city. You can cavort in a bathhouse in places like Houston, where sodomy is illegal, but not in San Francisco, where it is celebrated in street festivals. The policy is a mess.

Moreover, opening the baths

will not mean it's open season for unsafe sex. A system of disincentives for irresponsible sexual behavior exists independent of heavy-handed and clumsy government bans on certain kinds of sex establishments. There is, to begin with, potential civil or even criminal liability for any HIV-infected person having unsafe sex.

There is also the physical, emotional, and financial burden that still comes with HIV infection. Even with today's powerful anti-HIV drugs, the disease is no picnic. The drugs are expensive, prohibitively so for those with inadequate insurance. They almost always require a complicated daily regimen of pill-taking. We have no idea whether, or how long, the drugs will stave off deadly diseases. We do not know the long-term effects they will have on the human body. And the HIV-positive person must live with the radical uncertainty and fear the disease creates.

Finally, opening bathhouses – or allowing other forms of forbidden freedom – does not mean we surrender our right to make moral judgments about them. We can still decry (or extol) the culture of promiscuity they both reflect and promote. It only means this function will be taken away from government and shifted to families, churches, circles of friends, and other social institutions. Liberty is not libertinism.

Allowing people to lead their own lives carries risk, as all life does. The risk is that they will make poor choices and suffer the consequences of those choices. When we are children, our parents try to shield us from life's calamities until we have a chance to be educated about how to avoid them.

But we grow up. We make decisions and deal with the fallout. Our parents can't parent us forever, and neither should our government. The sooner the gay civil rights movement re-orient itself to that basic American idea, the sooner we will enjoy the full potential freedom brings. ▼

Dale Carpenter, an attorney, serves on the national Board of Directors of the Log Cabin Republicans. He is the winner of two Vice Versa awards for excellence in gay writing. He can be reached care of this publication or at OutRight@aol.com. For more OutRight, visit www.planetout.com.

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Detestable sins come to the New World

by David Bianco

Today in the United States, sodomy is primarily defined as oral or anal sex between two men or two women. More than a third of the states still have sodomy laws on their books, and the Supreme Court upheld those laws in 1986 in its anti-gay decision, *Bowers v. Hardwick*. But the original colonial sodomy laws, passed in the 1600s, had a much broader view of what constituted "sodomy."

American sodomy laws derived from the so-called English "buggery law," passed by Parliament in 1533 in the reign of Henry VIII. Until that year, the Roman Catholic Church had been responsible for judging and meting out punishment for sodomy, which was considered a mortal sin. Under the English Reformation, the king declared himself head of the church in England, cutting off the authority of the pope. "Buggery" (a popular word derived from the French *bougres*, meaning "heretical") became a criminal offense punishable in the courts by hanging. Even the clergy were subject to criminal prosecution for the offense.

In the so-called "New World," the settlement at Jamestown, Virginia, was founded in 1607 by the London Company as a British military and trading post. During its first years, Jamestown had few clergy members or women, both of which were seen as "civilizing" influences. Although British law was implicitly in force, in May 1610 the governor of Virginia, Sir Thomas Gates, instituted martial law in order to keep the young male colonists more firmly in line. Virginia's "Articles, Laws, and Orders, Divine, Politique, and Martial" covered a long list of both secular and religious infractions punishable by "pain of death" — theft, blasphemy, adultery, rape, illegal trade with Indians, and "the detestable sins of Sodomie." (It was plural because sodomy included male-male and male-female anal and oral sex, as well as bestiality.) The new code sought to instill a sense of order on what was seen as a wild, unruly group that needed "severe discipline ... sharp laws ... a hard life and much labor." Martial law was in effect for eight years, until more women and families began to arrive from England as settlers.

There were, however, no recorded executions for sodomy until 1624. The first person to be executed was Richard Cornish, a ship's captain accused of sexually assaulting his indentured servant, William Cowse. The charge, as chronicled in the minutes of the Virginia court, sounds today like a case of sexual harassment — Cornish wanted to have sex with Cowse, who refused and then was given extra work. On the basis of the testimony of another crewmember who overheard Cornish proposition Cowse, Cornish was tried and hanged. Two men who publicly objected to the execution as unjust received punishments of their own — standing on the pillory and having their ears cut off.

As the number of colonial settlements grew in the 1600s, each instituted its own local code of laws, and each included sodomy as a capital offense. The New England colonies in particular, which were founded by strict reli-

gious separatists, punished sodomy harshly because they considered it a crime against marriage and the family — a charge that has echoes in today's debates over homosexuality. But the concept of "family" was different 300 years ago; the family was, in fact, the major economic unit of production of that agricultural society. Early New Englanders faced brutal, unfamiliar weather conditions, crop failures, starvation, disease, high infant mortality, and common death in childbirth. Procreation was the key to the economic survival of the colonies. In this survivalist atmosphere, sodomy — both same-sex and opposite-sex — and masturbation "tended to the frustrating of the ordinance of marriage and the hindering of the generation of mankind," as John Winthrop declared in the 1646 sodomy trial of a man in Guilford, Connecticut. "Spilling" or "spending" male

"seed" in any kind of non-procreative activity was considered a sinful waste, because it put the future of the colonies in jeopardy.

Gay historians have found approximately 20 recorded cases of sodomy charges being brought against individual male colonists from 1624 to 1740; four resulted in the death penalty. Because lesbian sexual activity didn't involve "seed

spilling," it was apparently viewed more leniently. In one case of "lewd behavior ... upon a bed" between two women in

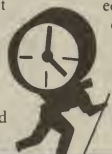
Plymouth, both women were merely given a warning. Only the New Haven colony authorized death for "filthiness" between women, judging lesbian sex acts as contrary to "the natural use of women" — that is, child-bearing. There are, however, no recorded instances of the punishment being carried out.

After the American Revolution, separation of church and

state became one of the founding principles of the new republic. Punishment for sodomy was gradually reduced to jail time and loss of property. Still, until 1961, all 50 states had some form of sodomy law. Today, most of the states with these antiquated laws on their books are in the South. Although rarely enforced, these statutes are used when convenient against lesbians and gay men, es-

pecially in child custody cases. ▼

David Bianco, M.A. is the author of *Modern Jewish History for Everyone*. He can be reached care of this publication or at DaveBianco@aol.com. For more Past Out, visit www.gay.com or www.planetout.com.



Past Out

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west coast, he worked with Grolier Society, Inc., which then was undergoing legal actions for fraudulent and deceptive sales techniques.

Erhard's study of many disciplines became the foundation for est training, including hypnosis, self-motivation techniques, encounter therapy, the Human Potential Movement, Zen, and Scientology.

Ascending through five Scientology levels, he received over 70 hours of "auditing." Many of the concepts and terminology used in the est training come from Scientology.

Erhard later took Mind Dynamics and became an instructor. Mind Dynamics went out of business and was sued by the state of California for fraudulent claims and practicing medicine without a license.

Erhard attributed the founding of the est training to a transformational experience on a freeway in California (the Golden Gate Bridge, sources claim) where he "experienced Self as Self in a direct and unmediated way. I didn't just experience Self. I became Self."

Carol Giambalvo's "The Hunger Project: Inside Out"

(http://members.aol.com/_ht_a/c/aro12180/hunger.htm) is a comprehensive critique and history of The Hunger Project and its ties to est. In comparing The Hunger Project with the AIDS Ride, similar patterns emerge.

The Hunger Project, "a non-profit, charitable corporation whose work is to generate the will to eliminate the persistence of hunger by the end of the century," was established in 1977 and claims to educate people about the problem of hunger. It is not a relief, development, or lobbying group.

Instead, it created what Giambalvo, a former Hunger Project employee, called "a massive expression of personal commitment by individuals to eliminate hunger. A network of volunteers carries out most of the work of The Hunger Project. It has 'enrolled' over five million individuals in the 'commitment to end hunger.'"

The Hunger Project has been the target of much controversy, mostly around Erhard, est, and its later incarnation, The Forum, which offers people "an opportunity to transform their lives."

Est, as such, no longer exists. Its name was changed to Werner Erhard & Associates and its program renamed The Forum. In addition to The Forum, it offered seminar programs, special events

with Werner Erhard, satellite events, and other "transformational" programs to individuals and businesses. Sold to employees and Erhard's brother, Nathan Rosenberg, the for-profit corporation was renamed Landmark Education Corporation, which pays Erhard substantial royalties from Landmark for the use of his "technology."

While The Hunger Project denies any affiliation with Werner Erhard or est, this is true only in a technical sense, according to Giambalvo. "The Hunger Project was legally incorporated as a separate charitable entity in the state of California. But the link between Werner Erhard and his organizations, both philosophically and in personnel, remains."

Forum fan

"It's a distortion to describe it that way," said Gustavo Suárez, communications director for the San Francisco AIDS Foundation, when asked about est-ian ties to the AIDS Ride. "It's a week where people bond. It can be a very beautiful thing. To compare it to est and a cult is invalid."

San Franciscan Bobby Singer disagrees. He noticed the "est-like" aspects of the Rides, and includes that as one of the main reasons for not riding again.

In the late 1980s Singer met Pallotta in a gay bar in Boston, he told the *Bay Area Reporter*. "He was heavily into est at the time," Singer recalled. "I don't know if people know that about him. I think there's a lot of est and Werner Erhard in his work."

"He tried to get me to do The Forum," he said. "He talked about it all the time. It's so much a part of who he is. I just thought it was kind of silly."

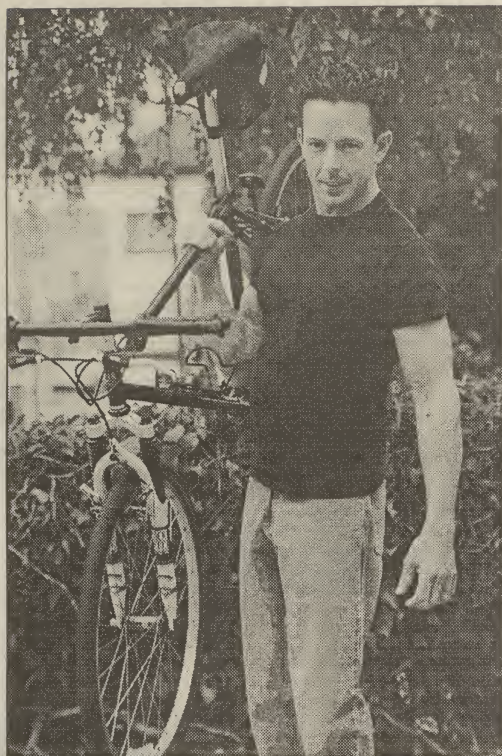
Singer noted how the Forum-type philosophy permeates AIDS Ride events. "There were all these inspirational quotes at places along the Ride. It definitely has an aspect of that."

Like many coping with the recent death of loved ones, Singer sought a place for his grief. "My mother and my best friend died three weeks apart. It was a pretty awful time. I don't know how conscious I was of it at the time, but I needed something."

He bought a bicycle and started riding around the scenic Bay Area, which he said "helped me release some of that anger. It was kind of meditative."

He had thought about doing an AIDS Ride, "not deeply, but just because other guys I knew did it," he said. "It sounded like fun. I always felt like I wanted to contribute somehow. I thought of it as a way to memorialize these people, since I don't really practice any kind of religion. It gave me an opportunity to find a place to grieve, and people to do it with. It really helped me get in touch with those feelings and release them."

Obviously, spending an ex-



"Est on wheels?" Bike rider Bobby Singer questions the AIDS Ride's underlying philosophy.

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hausting week honoring people lost to AIDS can be an emotional, cathartic experience.

But like The Hunger Project, organizers of the AIDS Ride do not admit to the ties between the group's philosophies and tactics. This leaves some former riders still questioning why and how they became so devoted, then disenchanted.

"I started to feel really sad, after having done it," said Singer. "I've gotten caught up in the political incorrectness of it all, and kind of forgotten why I did it to begin with and what an important experience it was for me."

Former employees of Pallotta's company mention having been encouraged, but not required, to take a Forum course - courses that average \$450 for a preliminary workshop. Former AIDS Ride administrator John Haley mentioned that some employees took the Forum courses, while others joked about it.

Like the AIDS Rides, the majority of Hunger Project workers are volunteers. According to Giambalvo, the majority, if not all, of the personnel on staff of The Hunger Project and its hundreds of "grassroots volunteers" had taken either est or Forum programs.

An oft-repeated goal of The Hunger Project is the goal stated by est founder Erhard: "I take responsibility for ending starvation within 20 years."

This statement is mirrored in the motivational speeches given at AIDS Rides, where the lofty goal of "ending AIDS within five years" has been offered as a sort of mantra for participants.

The conceptual aspect of The Hunger Project bears similarities to the AIDS Ride. Participation in The Hunger Project begins when a person signs an enrollment card, stating "The Hunger Project is mine completely. I am willing to be responsible for making the end of hunger an idea whose time has come."

Even its founder had to bluntly admit those grandiose goals were improbable. "The Hunger Project is not about solutions," Er-

hard said. "It's not about fixing the problem. The Hunger Project is about creating a context, creating the end of hunger as an idea. We will learn what we need to know to make an idea's time come, then we will know how to make the world work."

WCCO-TV's Garvin Snell was among the bikers at the 1996 Minnesota-Chicago AIDS Ride. His statements on his TV station's website unintentionally attest to the "idea" of symbols taking precedent over action.

"The whole point of the Ride is just to make a big statement," he said, "and it's a huge statement to make - to have 1,500 people out on their bikes. Just by being out here and doing it, we're effecting change."

Dave King, editor of *Columbia Journal* in New York City, whose special sports-themed issue premieres this summer, isn't so sure. "I have a mixed relationship with that organization," he said bluntly. "I did the first Boston-NY Ride and crewed on the second, and though it's an amazing, terrific experience both socially and athletically, I have growing concerns about the cult-like aura of Pallotta and Associates."

So, is it a good cult, or a bad cult, or not a cult at all? Thousands of people credit such groups with helping them take control of their lives. Many riders come directly from a vulnerable place of either losing a loved one or countless friends to AIDS, or even recently seroconverting themselves.

But is it a supportive environment or a staged format created to exploit the emotionally vulnerable? How many AIDS riders even know they may be trained in the Erhard school of thought? Are the AIDS Rides the first gay version of the Forum, or as one former rider called it, "est on wheels?"

Giambalvo's extensive research conclusively proves the ties between est and The Hunger Project, yet Hunger Project officials deny such associations. Pallotta's Beverly Hills-based publicist, JoAnne Forster of Bragman, Nyman & Cafarelli refused to

relay or answer related queries.

To serve Werner

"If you blow somebody's mind, you can quickly slip in some data about being. Est blows the mind."

— Werner Erhard in *East West Journal*, 1974.

Psychology Today's August 1975 issue implied est's more self-serving goals as luring such people into its ranks, citing est's end purpose as "to serve Werner and make est work," and the methods of the est training: "We're going to throw away your belief system, tear you down, and put you back together."

Giambalvo summarizes the magazine's findings: "It described the methods as designed alternately to confuse and enlighten subjects, to develop the authority of the trainer and build his suggestive power. The training contained common-sense psychology from which anyone could profit; simultaneously it was a masterful amalgam of consciousness-altering techniques that powerfully affect the innocent subject. The author's description of several stages in the training demonstrated the step-by-step confusion and helplessness experienced by subjects until they crack under the pressure and, in the helplessness of the moment (called 'snapping'), embrace the system."

Comparing the earlier est controversies, Giambalvo cites legal actions charging emotional damages experienced by subjects, including one death during est training. Other suits include nonpayment of a \$15 million loan and nonpayment of IRS taxes and penalties.

In December 1978, *Mother Jones* magazine published an exposé on The Hunger Project, its connection with Werner Erhard, and its possible use as a recruitment arm for his est training. Author Suzanne Gordon pointed to The Hunger Project as the first attempt by one of the "self"-oriented movements to address social or political issues. She raised such issues as: who gets the money?; are people participating in The Hunger Project pressured to take the est training?; why, if The Hunger Project claims no connection to est, is there an est seminar called "The Hunger Project Series?"; why are Hunger Project telephones often in est centers around the country?

New Internationalist, a world development publication, also questioned where all the intense activity of The Hunger Project was leading and whether it was capitalizing on people's concern about world poverty or, as Giambalvo puts it, "to insinuate the ideas of a mind-manipulating cult."

And like Pallotta, whose Beverly Hills home was purchased shortly after the second AIDS Ride, Erhard was involved in questionable financial activities as well. "He's applied a corporate model to AIDS fundraising, but he's making all this money and it's supported by volunteers," said former rider Singer of Pallotta.

Forbes magazine began an investigation of The Hunger Project and Werner Erhard in 1985, specifically about a lawsuit concerning a \$15 million unpaid low-interest loan from Wolfgang Somary of Zurich to Erhard.

The Byzantine details involve international money transfers in the millions, and alleged false grants to the puppet organization *Fundacion Soberana Orden de San Juan de Jerusalem* that served as intermediary for the loan at a 2 percent interest rate. This Costa Rican group had been set up by

an Erhard friend just several days before the transfer and stood to benefit by receiving a major portion of the interest payments.

Because of this and other controversies, the Peace Corps and other hunger organizations have dissociated themselves from The Hunger Project. The national board of directors of Oxfam, Canada passed a resolution that they would not endorse any activities sponsored by The Hunger Project nor will they accept any funds from the project. The Hunger Project's "Ending Hunger Briefing" program was barred from Toronto schools and from Ottawa and Carleton schools.

True lies

For Giambalvo, "Herein lies the heart of the ongoing controversy: Denial. Deception. People being enrolled into The Hunger Project and being asked for contributions were not fully informed. Volunteers, most of whom were est graduates, were kept so busy doing the work of The Hunger Project and immersing themselves in the 'principles and abstractions' that they very often could not see that there was a vast difference between what they were told to say to the general public and what actually was being said to those inside the organization regarding its ideology."

Giambalvo states, "The hidden agenda of The Hunger Project is to transform the world according to the 'principles and abstractions' of Werner Erhard. Hunger is just the vehicle. It could be any issue: peace, disarmament, prejudice, you name it."

The exhaustion/relief pattern is similar to that of any recipe for creating devoted converts.

Or AIDS.

Giambalvo's critique can easily be compared. "Hunger is an issue that most people would agree needs our attention. After all, who wouldn't want hunger to end? How can you fault an organization with such a noble purpose?"

The association between AIDS and hunger becomes clear; criticism of the Ride is seen as criticism of any AIDS fundraising efforts.

"The Hunger Project uses its purpose to deflect criticism and to shame anyone who might criticize a 'noble' organization which has such a noble purpose," Giambalvo said. "This implies that a noble purpose protects an organization from deceptive behaviors and hidden agendas on the part of its volunteers, staff and the organization's founders."

With obscure "principles and abstractions" based on Erhard's "Source Document," The Hunger Project nevertheless maintains it has no philosophy. Likewise, Erhard says that the est training and The Forum have no philosophy. According to Erhard, it is nothing to be believed, since "the truth believed is a lie."

Sacred cow

Aya Kamsky was born in St. Petersburg, the Russian city formerly known as Leningrad. Now a Californian, and a former AIDS Ride cyclist, she noted the diversity of participants as a plus. "Straight and gay people were about half and half. A lot of gay people assumed it was a gay event."

The interaction between people is what she called a highlight. "No community should think another community is going to come

and rescue them. We're all people."

In 1995 Kamsky raised just under \$10,000 while working for a company that did matching fundraising, a method she cites as very effective. She had not cycled extensively, but "living in the Bay Area, and before that in Manhattan, I have a constant awareness of AIDS. There's always a feeling that you ought to be doing something."

She started riding occasionally, then went to a meetings on how to raise funds. The meetings and training rides also conditioned participants how to do the Ride, not only physically, but mentally and emotionally prepare them for facing and conquering failure.

For the first leg of the Ride, she then lived in Santa Cruz, and relaxed at home and in a hot tub. "I really like biking and camping, just not at the same time."

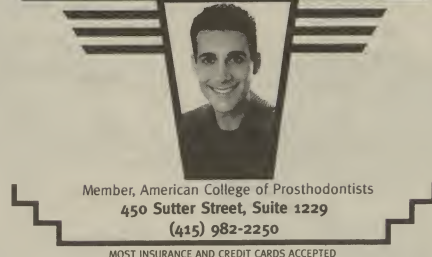
Unable to ride in successive years, now that "it's harder to get time off from work," the software company engineer focuses now on in-kind services, mentioning a contractor who works for an AIDS agency and donates his skills as a better way for people to contribute. "Maybe it's a fallacy to say, 'It's AIDS, it's a sacred cow. If Dan Pallotta's so good, then maybe he should charge out the wazoo.'"

While Kamsky did not quit doing the Rides for any reason other than inconvenience, others' departures have arisen directly from the very nature of the events' constructed passion. It is an atmosphere that is typical at Hunger Project events as well.

Former rider and Pallotta em-

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Two plead not guilty to murder of Billy Jack Gaither

by Mark Norby

The mother of Billy Jack Gaither watched Eric Mullins and Charles Monroe Butler being led from the Coosa County, Alabama courtroom back to jail Thursday, May 27, fighting back tears over the death of her son. Following an arraignment hearing where the two pleaded not guilty to her son's murder, Mrs. Gaither stood before reporters with Randy Gaither, the victim's surviving brother, as they told the media that they believe Mullins and Butler are guilty and that "they deserve the death penalty."

"If convicted, the only judgment I see is the death penalty," said the 36-year-old Randy Gaither. He said his parents were devastated by his brother's death and found it necessary to move from Sylacauga — the town where they raised their son — to the neighboring county "because living there brought back too many memories of Billy Jack."

Randy Gaither commented that the brutal murder February 19, allegedly because the victim was gay, has spurred him "to do anything I can to see a hate crime bill passed in Alabama that would increase penalties," he said. Alabama is one of 19 states in the country without laws prohibiting hate crimes against homosexuals.

Separate hearings were held for Mullins and Butler who, on

March 4, pleaded guilty to the murder of Gaither. But after consultations with their attorneys, Mullins pleaded not guilty to the charges and Butler pleaded not guilty by reason of mental defect or mental insanity.

"He doesn't have a mental defect," Randy Gaither continued. "They planned this for two weeks. My brother never hurt anyone." Randy Gaither said he didn't know Mullins or Butler, although Butler's grandmother "used to babysit me as a child."

Butler's attorneys are Billy Hill and Haran Lowe, and Mullins's attorney is Rod Giddens. Hill said he did not anticipate using the insanity defense, and rejects the notion his client is a sociopath. "I didn't feel he was a cold-blooded killer when I took the case," he said. "After all the investigation, I still don't believe he is a cold-blooded killer."

Billy Jack Gaither was murdered after he was lured from a Sylacauga bar, beaten, thrown into the trunk of his own car, driven to a remote location, castrated, clubbed to death with an ax handle, then burned atop old tires doused in kerosene. Mullins and Butler confessed to the crimes two weeks after they occurred. Two days before he came to authorities, Mullins stated "God told me I needed to confess." But at last week's hearing Mullins requested that the court throw out his earlier statement to investigators in which he had confessed to the



Billy Jack Gaither

killing.

Hill said his client "will keep the door open if the state wants to make a plea bargain." However, Giddens said it was too early to determine if a deal might be possible for Mullins. "We've got the next 30 days for discovery," Giddens stated. "Once we get the evidence, we must have a reasonable time to look at it. We could also call in our own experts to look at the evidence."

In addition to the not guilty pleas, defense attorneys filed a number of motions, including one from Butler asking that the case file, hearings, and the trial itself be closed to the media. The motions will be considered at a June 24 pretrial hearing, where a judge could accept a guilty plea if either Mullins or Butler work out a deal with prosecutors. Both Mullins and Butler remain in a Coosa County jail. ▼

Jury recommends death for killer of 6 gays

United Press International

It took a Jacksonville jury less than an hour Friday, May 28 to recommend sentencing a man who has admitted killing six gay men to death in one of those murders.

Thirty-seven-year-old Gary Ray Bowles got a new sentencing hearing in the 1994 bludgeoning death of 42-year-old Walter Hinton after the Florida Supreme Court overturned his first death sentence. The high court ruled that prosecutors should not have mentioned Bowles's professed

hatred of gays during the trial.

Bowles also confessed to killing other gay men, but was only sentenced to life in prison in those cases.

He will be sentenced for the Hinton murder later. The judge may or may not follow the jury's recommendation. ▼

Justice is a drag in Florida

by Penny Nelson, UPI

A judge in Maitland, Florida, has granted a male defendant's request for permission to dress as a woman during his murder trial.

Jabari Stephens, 19, was dressed as a woman when he was arrested late last year for the murder of Daniel Patrick McGrew. His attorney argues that allowing Stephens to dress as a woman in front of the jury is crucial to his defense.

In granting the request, Judge Stan Strickland said McGrew must submit to the court the clothing he intends to wear at least three days before the trial begins.

A pretrial hearing is scheduled for July 21. ▼

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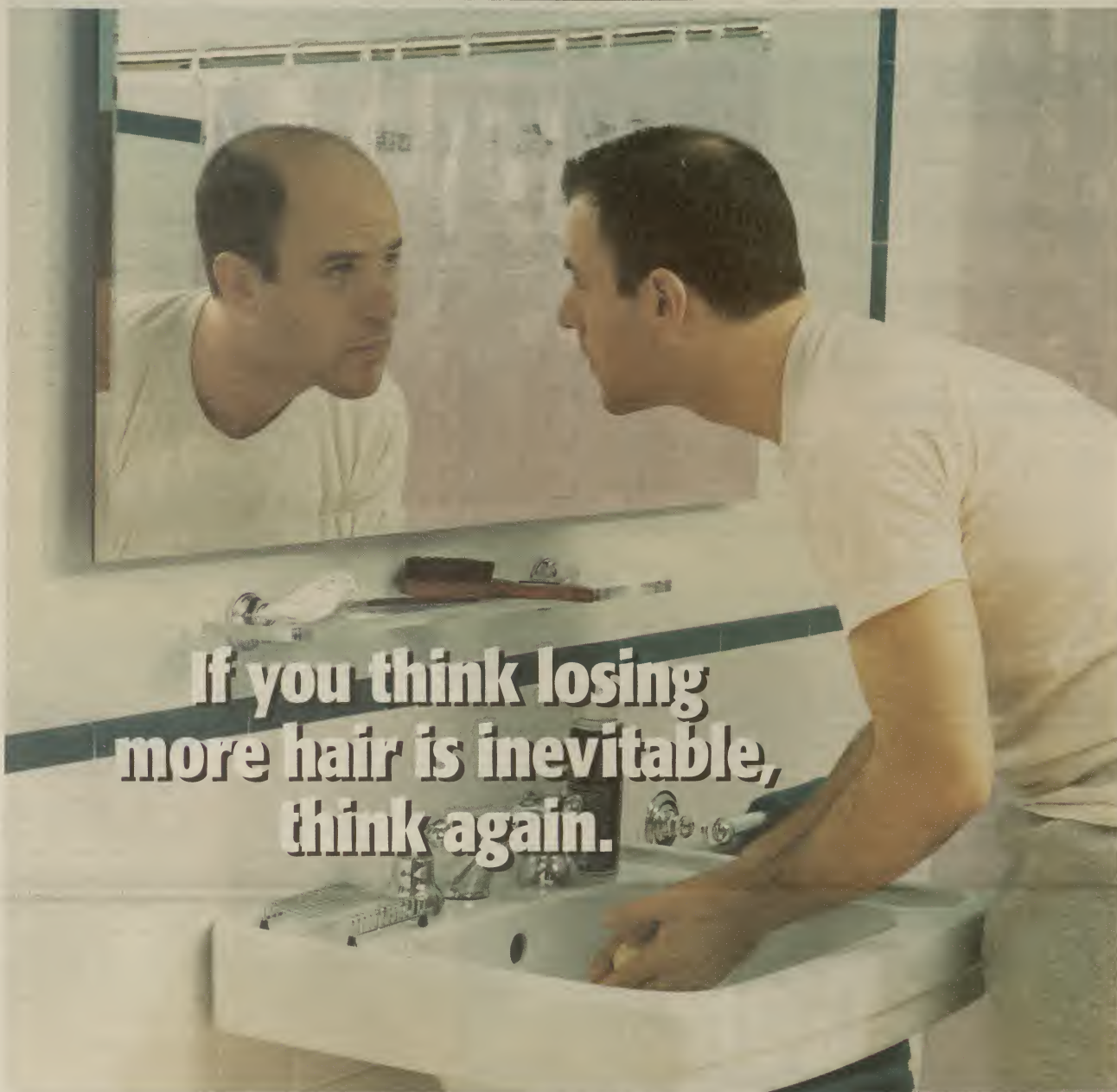
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*Based on vertex studies at 24 months of men 18 to 41 with mild to moderate hair loss.

Scientists have recently discovered that men with male pattern hair loss have an increased level of DHT in their scalps. PROPECIA blocks the formation of DHT and, in this way, appears to interrupt a key factor in the development of inherited male pattern hair loss in men. Importantly, PROPECIA helps grow natural hair—not just peach fuzz—and is as convenient to take as a vitamin: one pill a day.

Only a doctor can determine if PROPECIA is right for you. PROPECIA is for **men only**. Further, women who are or may potentially be pregnant must not use PROPECIA and should not handle crushed or broken tablets because of the risk of a specific kind of birth defect. (See accompanying Patient Information for details.) PROPECIA tablets are coated and will prevent contact with the active ingredient during normal handling.

You may need to take PROPECIA daily for three months or more to see visible results. PROPECIA may not regrow all your hair. And if you stop using this product, you will gradually lose the hair you have gained. There is not sufficient evidence that PROPECIA works for recession at the temporal areas. If you haven't seen results after 12 months of using PROPECIA, further treatment is unlikely to be of benefit.

Like all prescription products, PROPECIA may cause side effects. A very small number of men experienced certain side effects, such as: less desire for sex, difficulty in achieving an erection, and a decrease in the amount of semen. Each of these side effects occurred in less than 2% of men. These side effects were reversible and went away in men who stopped taking PROPECIA. They also disappeared in most men (58%) who continued taking PROPECIA.

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Please read this leaflet before you start taking PROPECIA. Also, read the information included with PROPECIA each time you renew your prescription, just in case anything has changed. Remember, this leaflet does not take the place of careful discussions with your doctor. You and your doctor should discuss PROPECIA when you start taking your medication and at regular checkups.

What is PROPECIA used for?

PROPECIA is used for the treatment of male pattern hair loss on the vertex and the anterior mid-scalp area.

PROPECIA is for use by **MEN ONLY** and should **NOT** be used by women or children.

What is male pattern hair loss?

Male pattern hair loss is a common condition in which men experience thinning of the hair on the scalp. Often, this results in a receding hairline and/or balding on the top of the head. These changes typically begin gradually in men in their 20s.

Doctors believe male pattern hair loss is due to heredity and is dependent on hormonal effects. Doctors refer to this type of hair loss as androgenetic alopecia.

Results of clinical studies:

For 12 months, doctors studied over 1800 men aged 18 to 41 with mild to moderate amounts of ongoing hair loss. A 11 men, whether receiving PROPECIA or placebo (a pill containing no medication) were given a medicated shampoo (Neutrogena T/Gel® Shampoo). Of these men, approximately 1200 with hair loss at the top of the head were studied for an additional 12 months. In general, men who took PROPECIA maintained or increased the number of visible scalp hairs and noticed improvement in their hair in the first year, with the effect maintained in the second year. Hair counts in men who did not take PROPECIA continued to decrease.

In one study, patients were questioned on the growth of body hair. PROPECIA did not appear to affect hair in places other than the scalp.

Will PROPECIA work for me?

For most men, PROPECIA increases the number of scalp hairs, helping to fill in thin or balding areas of the scalp. Men taking PROPECIA noted a slowing of hair loss during two years of use. Although results will vary, generally you will not be able to grow back all of the hair you have lost. There is not sufficient evidence that PROPECIA works in the treatment of receding hairline in the temporal area on both sides of the head.

Male pattern hair loss occurs gradually over time. On average, healthy hair grows only about half an inch each month. Therefore, it will take time to see any effect.

You may need to take PROPECIA daily for three months or more before you see a benefit from taking PROPECIA. PROPECIA can only work over the long term if you continue taking it. If the drug has not worked for you in twelve months, further treatment is unlikely to be of benefit. If you stop taking PROPECIA, you will likely lose the hair you have gained within 12 months of stopping treatment. You should discuss this with your doctor.

How should I take PROPECIA?

Follow your doctor's instructions.

- Take one tablet by mouth each day.
- You may take PROPECIA with or without food.
- If you forget to take PROPECIA, do **not** take an extra tablet. Just take the next tablet as usual.

PROPECIA will **not** work faster or better if you take it more than once a day.

Who should **NOT** take PROPECIA?

- PROPECIA is for the treatment of male pattern hair loss in **MEN ONLY** and should not be taken by women or children.
- Anyone allergic to any of the ingredients.

A warning about PROPECIA and pregnancy.

- Women who are or may potentially be pregnant:
 - must not use PROPECIA
 - should not handle crushed or broken tablets of PROPECIA.

If a woman who is pregnant with a male baby absorbs the active ingredient in PROPECIA, either by swallowing or through the skin, it may cause abnormalities of a male baby's sex organs. If a woman who is pregnant comes into contact with the active ingredient in PROPECIA, a doctor should be consulted. PROPECIA tablets are coated and will prevent contact with the active ingredient during normal handling, provided that the tablets are not broken or crushed.

What are the possible side effects of PROPECIA?

Like all prescription products, PROPECIA may cause side effects. In clinical studies, side effects from PROPECIA were uncommon and did not affect most men. A small number of men experienced certain sexual side effects. These men reported one or more of the following: less desire for sex; difficulty in achieving an erection; and, a decrease in the amount of semen. Each of these side effects occurred in less than 2% of men. These side effects went away in men who stopped taking PROPECIA. They also disappeared in most men who continued taking PROPECIA.

The active ingredient in PROPECIA is also used by older men at a five-times higher dose to treat enlargement of the prostate. Some of these men reported other side effects, including problems with ejaculation, breast swelling and/or tenderness and allergic reactions such as lip swelling and rash. In clinical studies with PROPECIA, these side effects occurred as often in men taking placebo as in those taking PROPECIA.

Tell your doctor promptly about these or any other unusual effects.

- PROPECIA can affect a blood test called PSA (Prostate-Specific Antigen) for the screening of prostate cancer. If you have a PSA test done, you should tell your doctor that you are taking PROPECIA.

Storage and handling.

Keep PROPECIA in the original container and keep the container closed. Store it in a dry place at room temperature. PROPECIA tablets are coated and will prevent contact with the active ingredient during normal handling, provided that the tablets are not broken or crushed.

Do not give your PROPECIA tablets to anyone else. It has been prescribed only for you. Keep PROPECIA and all medications out of the reach of children.

THIS LEAFLET PROVIDES A SUMMARY OF INFORMATION ABOUT PROPECIA. IF AFTER READING THIS LEAFLET YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS OR ARE NOT SURE ABOUT ANYTHING, ASK YOUR DOCTOR.

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Charles Pierce

◀ page 1

Performing Arts Library of Lincoln Center, New York. By May, 1999 the materials were catalogued by the staff, and are now available to researchers.

Born on Bastille Day in 1926, Pierce was named after his grandfather, Dr. Charles E. Pierce, and spent his youth in Watertown, New York. Beginning around 1944, he worked at a local radio station WJNY, playing the Hammond organ and acting in radio dramas. In a vintage photo taken at the station, 18-year-old Charles, seated at the organ, is shown looking at the sheet music of "They're Either Too Young Or Too Old," a song Bette Davis sang in the Warner Bros. film *Thank Your Lucky Stars*.

It was not easy for the critics to describe Pierce's unique act, but when they did, he would happily appropriate the description. Apparently it was Herb Caen (in whose *San Francisco Chronicle* column Pierce appeared 50 times) who dubbed him a "male actress." Another description he enjoyed was "the Master and Mistress of Surprise or Disguise." When he played the Fairmont Venetian Room in the 1980s, the ads showed Charles as Bette Davis, holding a smoldering cigarette, with the caption, "The Last Drag."

Pierce's first stand-up comedy routines were naively costumed. In a radio interview with me in 1983, Charles said, "Through the years the act has had a lot of phases. I originally started in a tuxedo with a box of props. Then I started working clubs in Florida that required a lot of changes in material, so then I started working more or less in drag, and I say 'more or less' because Florida [laws] were very strict: You could wear black pants, you could wear a black turtleneck sweater, but you could not wear a dress. You could put feather boas on, and hats and gloves and pocketbooks, but you couldn't be in drag. And so we did a lot of pantomimes, and then I would do my 'live' material (maybe 10 minutes) at the end of that show. Eventually we ended up here in San Francisco (When I say 'we,' I refer to my partner at that time, Rio Dante), and we 'holed up' at the Gilded Cage for six years. We did a lot of pantomimes, and Mae West's [rock and roll] 'Treat Him Right' was one of them."

In this same interview, Pierce told me he never took the impersonations too seriously, "I've been billed as the 'stand up comic in a dress or the grand impostor,'" he said, "but it's all for laughs, it's all for fun and comedy."

Through the years, Pierce's reputation built up from playing small gay clubs around the country, but San Francisco embraced him as no other town.

John Wallraft, who attended the Pasadena Playhouse with Charles in 1947-48, reminisced, "He wanted to be a stage actor. He raced around Hollywood trying to get jobs. He went to a theatre group called Cabaret Concert, doing sketches à la Noël Coward. Back at Pasadena Playhouse, he played in *Richard III*, and played the Ghost of Christmas Past in *A Christmas Carol*. Pierce also did some summer stock in upstate New York before returning to California. He had gone to see Arthur Blake - who did famous impressions of Bette Davis, Charles Laughton, and Tallulah Bankhead. Charles submitted some material to Blake, but Blake told him he wrote his own, so Charles said 'I'll use it myself!'

While Living at Algonquin Hotel in Pasadena, in the early 1950s, we went to see *The Star* with Bette Davis. Charles decided it was fodder for a comedy parody, and performed it for me in his apartment. Charles and I started writing material, such as the Norma Desmond routine. At a Hollywood party, he played for a group that included Harriet Parsons (Louella's daughter), Jane Withers, Franklyn Pangborn, and Mary McCarty. Charles did the tux bit in Altadena at Café La Vie, doing stand-up seriously. At various bars, he would improvise. Eventually Ann Dee, of Ann's 440 Club [in San Francisco] saw him in Altadena and signed him up for her club, where Johnny Mathis later got his start.

"He then traveled to Florida, to the Red Carpet [in Miami Beach] and the Echo Club. In Miami he met his future show-biz partner, Rio Dante, and they started to do lip-synching. They also created the puppets, the Moppettes, headless puppets Charles would put up to his own face and then perform outrageous dialogue and suggestive poses - with the likes of Shirley Temple, a Singing Nun, and a stripper. Rio Dante and Charles did a gig at the Statler Hotel in Hollywood and the Club Capri. Next stop was San Francisco's legendary Gilded Cage, around 1962, where he played a record six years. He made many appearances on television, but not always in drag: Dick Cavett, *Fame* (as a bag lady), Wayland Flowers and Madame, *Love American Style*, *Chico and the Man*, *Starsky and Hutch*, *Laverne and Shirley*."

Through the years, Charles has had the best musical directors/accompanists in the business, and they all admit to having learned a great deal about comedy and timing from Pierce. Those who have accompanied him include Michael Biagi, Michael Ashton, Joan Edgar, Rio Dante, and Michael Feinstein (at the Backlot of Studio One, September, 1981). That's three Michaels, a Rio, and a "real Woman," as Charles used to call Joan in front of a screaming, adoring audience.

Perfectionist to the end

Joan Edgar, Pierce's musical director for seven years, said on the day of Charles's death that she had marveled at the way he would constantly work on his act, even up to the final performance. At the end of a three-month run, just before the final show, in his dressing room he remarked, "Darling, you know that line where I say that our theatre curtain used to be Orson Welles' boxer shorts? Well, it would sound funnier if I said 'It was one of Kate Smith's slack suits. You see, the sound of all those consonant 'ks' make it sound funnier ... or, how would it sound to say Rosemary Clooney's caftan?'"

Restaurateur Les Natali, who produced several of Pierce's shows at Bimbo's 365 Club in the early 1970s (a Blue Thumb LP was made of this show!) remarked, "I've had the pleasure of knowing Charles as a fan and a friend for 30 years. He was always fun to be with, on stage and off, so witty, so sharp, so perceptive, and always ready with a line to provoke a laugh. What made Charles happy was making other people happy. And he was the best. I will miss him dearly."

Billy Saetre, a professional singer/friend of Pierce living in Munich, remarked, "There is a genuine warmth and love of the 'art' of performing that so few folks have anymore. Of course being in the classical branch of performing, I see a completely



Charles Pierce in 1983

different side of this silly world, where 'genuineness' is absolutely foreign. There is such a love of humour with Charles, and when he blows a line, or messes up a joke/story, he relishes in his own embarrassment as well as getting himself out of the situation.

"I remember crying at his last show when he sang 'Illusion,' an old Dietrich number. There is something so poignant about him and his connection with an audience. ... Charles Pierce completes the information from Alpha to Omega. Everything the audience not only wants, but needs to know is shared. No silly nonsense or mystery there. Gott sei Dank!"

Russ Alley (General Manager of the York Hotel and Plush Room 1980-1983) produced more than 500 performances of Pierce at the York Hotel's Plush Room. Alley later went to work for Rick Swig at the Fairmont, as director of public relations and entertainment. It was there that

Alley convinced Swig to hire Charles Pierce, by showing him Pierce's revenue had "saved" the Plush Room from closing. Alley remarked, "I had been trying to sell Charles to them for years. I showed Swig the numbers, and told him 'Herb Caen will love it.'" And he did.

Alley told me, "No matter how many friends we have lost over the years, it is always hard to picture this place without them. There will never be another Charles ... or a better Katharine Hepburn as 'Eleanor of Aquitaine' (turkey waddle!) Maria Ouspenskaya (one of his Turban Ladies), Bette, Tallulah, those ratty foxes of his from way back ... Dietrich 'I was on a flight from pawis to Los Angeles and both of my wigs were on the flight with me; one in first class and the other in coach,' and of course Jeanette MacDonald and that swing.

"So many great memories."

John Epperson (The Fabulous

Lypsinka) upon hearing of Pierce's death, remarked, "Charles Pierce, the self-described 'male actress,' was one of the funniest people in the world. He was also incredibly generous. He had many successes at The Ballroom, a nightclub in New York City. In 1991, when the management asked him to please come back again, he said, 'Call Lypsinka instead.' He was sorely missed by all of his fans for the last several years in all the venues where he was so popular. I know he will be greatly missed by his good friend Bea Arthur. When I saw Charles at The Plush Room many years ago, he acknowledged Bea, in the audience, as having the greatest comic timing in the world. He should know: Charles had the second best. Years later, I was performing in Los Angeles, and he brought Bea to my dressing room door and she intoned, 'You're mad, darling. Simply mad.' (Thank you for that, Charles!)"

"A couple of years ago I saw Bea at a Bob Mackie fashion show in NY. She said, 'Is there anything you want me to tell Charles?' I said, 'Please tell him hello.' I wish I had said, 'Tell him he's an inspiration.' For the name 'Charles Pierce' meant 'magic' and what he would call 'madness.' People who never saw him as Tallulah and Bette Davis - at the same time - don't know what they've missed. (People who don't know Tallulah and Bette don't know what they're missing!) People who did see Charles's act know they saw a comic mastermind." ▼

A memorial will be held at 1 p.m. Saturday, June 19 at the Church of the Hills, at Forest Lawn Hollywood Hills.

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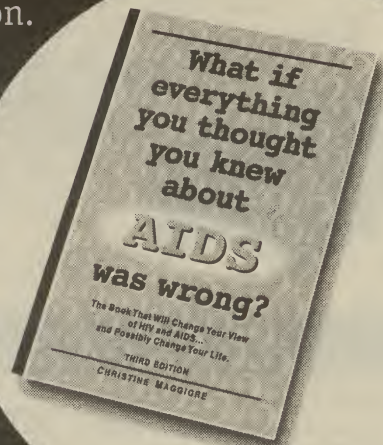
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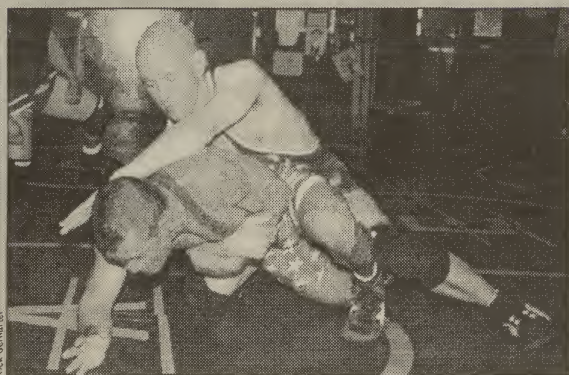
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Johnny Almy (bottom) and Kenji Matsouka (top) of Golden Gate Wrestlers demonstrated various take-down techniques at the Eureka Valley Recreation Center during a Memorial Day Tournament attended by more than 30 wrestlers from the West Coast and New York City. The weekend included instructional clinics, a tournament, and a day of relaxation at the Russian River.

Feds ease up on pot research

by Liz Highleyman

On Friday, May 21, the federal government announced that it would make government-grown marijuana easier to obtain by academic researchers seeking to study the medicinal use of the drug.

Government-produced cannabis, grown on a heavily guarded farm at the University of Mississippi, is currently the only legally approved source of research-grade marijuana for clinical studies. Many patients use cannabis to control AIDS-related wasting, to reduce nausea caused by cancer chemotherapy, and to alleviate a variety of other ailments.

The production and distribution of marijuana for research purposes is tightly controlled by the Drug Enforcement Agency, and scientists such as Dr. Donald Abrams of the University of California at San Francisco have been

forced to undergo a long and grueling process to obtain the drug.

Under the new guidelines, the National Institute on Drug Abuse, part of the National Institutes of Health, will provide government-grown cannabis to researchers whose study proposals have been approved by a U.S. Public Health Service medical review committee. Scientists will be expected to pay for the marijuana to help defray the expenses of growing the drug. Disbursements of marijuana under the new guideline are not expected to begin until December.

General Barry McCaffrey of the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) supports the decision to loosen restrictions on medical cannabis research. The agency released the statement, "This decision underscores the federal government's commitment to ensuring that the discussion of the medical efficacy and safety of cannabinoids takes

place within the context of medicine and science," and asserted that the new guidelines were not a reversal of existing policy.

The guidelines note that cannabis used for medical research "must have a consistent and predictable potency, must be free of contamination, and must be available in sufficient amounts to support the needs of the study."

Medical marijuana proponents hailed the administration's decision. According to Ethan Nadelman of the Lindesmith Center, the decision was "an implicit acknowledgment that the government has blocked research into medical marijuana for explicitly political reasons for the last two decades." The AIDS Action Committee issued a statement calling on the federal government and state and local officials to "act immediately and make smoked marijuana available to those who need it," even while research is underway. ▼

United Airlines

◀ page 1

and ground service equipment facility, it must provide the no-cost benefits to its employees with domestic partners unless the airline obtains a stay, Aftergut said.

If United does not seek a stay, the city will ask the court to lift the injunction.

Boycott continues

City officials were quick to claim victory at a hastily arranged news conference last Thursday at City Hall. "The court has given us a loud, judicious 'yes' for equal treatment," Aftergut said.

"The ordinance aims to fulfill in economic terms a promise long required in city contracts: that parties doing business with the city not discriminate based on sexual orientation or marital status," Wilken wrote in the opinion.

Jeff Sheehy, who helped draft the original ordinance that Supervisors Tom Ammiano, Leslie Katz, and then-Supervisor Susan Leal sponsored in 1996, said the Equal Benefits Advocates-sponsored boycott of United Airlines will remain in effect. "When United complies with the law the boycott will be lifted," Sheehy said. "It's frankly homophobic if they continue with the lawsuit."

Katz said she hopes United will come back to the negotiating table and discuss offering all benefits, including health and pension benefits, to the domestic partners of their employees. "United has argued for months that this case is

not about discrimination against people with domestic partners. Now is the time for them to turn those words into reality," Katz said.

Aftergut pointed out that earlier this year, United agreed to abide by the city of Los Angeles's living wage ordinance, which is much more expensive for the company than San Francisco's equal benefits law. At the time, United spokesman Matt Triaca said the L.A. living wage law "made good business sense," and that it was a "reasonable" law.

Aftergut brought enlargements of court documents to the news conference, showing United's own policy authorizes compliance with local benefits laws. Additionally, he showed off internal notes from a 1997 meeting about domestic partner benefits between John Samolis, former vice president for people services, and United Chairman Jerry Greenwald, where it was discussed getting unions involved and starting up "right away." "No roadblocks," the note stated. Notes from another 1997 meeting between United officials show the airline was unwilling to be the first to offer equal benefits.

'Significant' case

Aftergut called Wilken's decision against SDMI "very, very significant," because it was brought by a business that was determined to be ineligible for a city contract because it wouldn't comply with the law. The airlines, because they adhere to various federal regulations, have been viewed as somewhat unique with respect to complying with the ordinance. In the

SDMI case, Wilken granted the city's request for a summary judgment and ruled that California's marriage law and community property law do not override the city's equal benefits ordinance. "Neither does the court find any evidence that the ordinance regulates an area fully occupied by state law," Wilken wrote.

SDMI, which has offices in several states, including California, provides maintenance services to private and government entities for large electrical transformers. It submitted the low bid of \$143,455 to maintain the city's electrical transformers at Hetch Hetchy in 1997, but lost the contract when it refused to comply with the ordinance. SDMI had asked for an exemption from the ordinance, which the city denied.

SDMI has stated in court documents that it conducts its business in accordance with Christian biblical principles.

ACLJ's attorneys disagreed with the court's ruling and plan to appeal. "This ruling changes corporate America by creating a culture shift that legitimizes same-sex relationships," said Jay Sekulow, ACLJ's chief counsel. "The ordinance redefines the institution of marriage and conflicts with the moral values of most Americans."

Cynthia Goldstein, with the city's Human Rights Commission, said there are currently 2,300 companies that comply with the ordinance and offer benefits to domestic partners of employees, affecting over one million workers. ▼

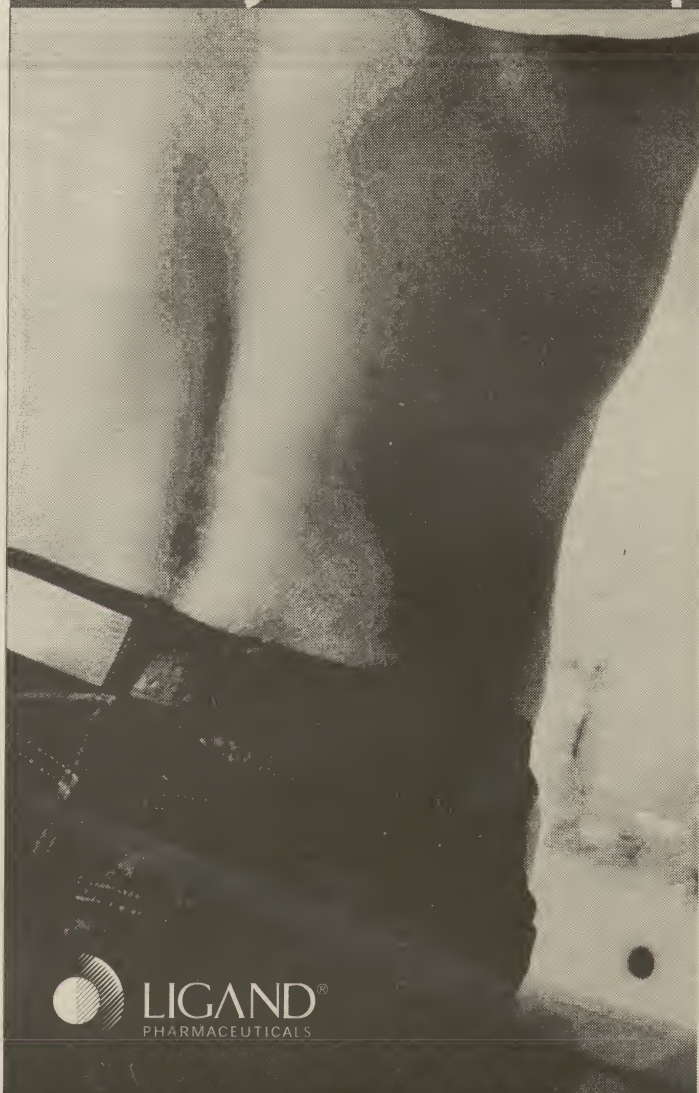


Panretin® gel is an innovative, self-administered topical retinoid gel used to treat skin lesions in persons with HIV-related Kaposi's sarcoma. Your doctor can advise whether treatment with Panretin® gel is appropriate for you.

Panretin® gel is generally applied two times each day. Its use should be evaluated by your doctor in relation to other treatments you may be taking. Panretin® gel can be used whether or not you've tried any other anti-KS treatments, but should not be used when systemic anti-KS therapy is required.

Panretin® gel does not prevent the appearance of new lesions or the increased growth of KS lesions not treated with Panretin® gel. Patients using Panretin® gel should avoid prolonged exposure of the treated area to sunlight or other

A new KS treatment that you can apply at home.



ultraviolet light. While using Panretin® gel, you may experience some local effects such as redness, discomfort, itching, and skin peeling or flaking at the area of application. Other possible local skin effects include: rawness, surface or deep cracking, scabbing, crusting, drainage, oozing, or infection. Consult your health care provider for more information on how to manage these effects. Do not use Panretin® gel if you are pregnant or breast feeding.

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BRIEF SUMMARY

The following is a brief summary. Before prescribing, please consult full prescribing information.

INDICATIONS AND USAGE

Panretin[®] gel is indicated for topical treatment of cutaneous lesions in patients with AIDS-related Kaposi's sarcoma. Panretin[®] gel is not indicated when systemic anti-KS therapy is required (e.g., more than 10 new KS lesions in the prior month, symptomatic lymphedema, symptomatic pulmonary KS, or symptomatic visceral involvement). There is no experience to date using Panretin[®] gel with systemic anti-KS treatment.

CONTRAINDICATIONS

Panretin[®] gel is contraindicated in patients with a known hypersensitivity to retinoids or to any of the ingredients of the product.

WARNINGS

Pregnancy: Panretin[®] gel could cause fetal harm if significant absorption were to occur in a pregnant woman. 9-*cis*-Retinoic acid has been shown to be teratogenic in rabbits and mice. An increased incidence of fused sternebrae and limb and craniofacial defects occurred in rabbits given oral doses of 0.5 mg/kg/day (about five times the estimated daily human topical dose on a mg/m² basis, assuming complete systemic absorption of 9-*cis*-retinoic acid, when Panretin[®] gel is administered as a 60 g tube over 1 month in a 60 kg human) during the period of organogenesis. Limb and craniofacial defects also occurred in mice given a single oral dose of 50 mg/kg on day eleven of gestation (about 127 times the estimated daily human topical dose on a mg/m² basis). Oral 9-*cis*-retinoic acid was also embryocidal, as indicated by early resorptions and post-implantation loss when it was given during the period of organogenesis to rabbits at doses of 1.5 mg/kg/day (about 15 times the estimated daily human topical dose on a mg/m² basis) and to rats at doses of 5 mg/kg/day (about 25 times the estimated daily human topical dose on a mg/m² basis). Animal reproduction studies with topical 9-*cis*-retinoic acid have not been conducted. It is not known whether topical Panretin[®] gel can modulate endogenous 9-*cis*-retinoic acid levels in a pregnant woman nor whether systemic exposure is increased by application to ulcerated lesions or by duration of treatment. There are no adequate and well-controlled studies in pregnant women. If Panretin[®] gel is used during pregnancy, or if the patient becomes pregnant while taking it, the patient should be apprised of the potential hazard to the fetus. Women of child-bearing potential should be advised to avoid becoming pregnant.

PRECAUTIONS

Panretin[®] gel is indicated for topical treatment of Kaposi's sarcoma. Patients with cutaneous T-cell lymphoma were less tolerant of topical Panretin[®] gel; five of seven patients had 6 episodes of treatment-limiting toxicities—grade 3 dermal irritation—with Panretin[®] gel (0.01% or 0.05%).

Photosensitivity: Retinoids as a class have been associated with photosensitivity. There were no reports of photosensitivity associated with the use of Panretin[®] gel in the clinical studies. Nonetheless, because in vitro data indicate that 9-*cis*-retinoic acid may have a weak photosensitizing effect, patients should be advised to minimize exposure of treated areas to sunlight and sunlamps during the use of Panretin[®] gel.

Drug Interactions: Patients who are applying Panretin[®] gel should not concurrently use products that contain DEET (N,N-diethyl-m-toluidide), a common component of insect repellent products. Animal toxicology studies showed increased DEET toxicity when DEET was included as part of the formulation.

Although there was no clinical evidence in the vehicle-controlled studies of drug interactions with systemic antiretroviral agents, including protease inhibitors, macrolide antibiotics, and azole antifungals, the effect of Panretin[®] gel on the steady-state concentrations of these drugs is not known. No drug interaction data are available on concomitant administration of Panretin[®] gel and systemic anti-KS agents.

Drug/Laboratory Test Interactions: No interference with laboratory tests has been observed.

Carcinogenesis, Mutagenesis, Impairment of Fertility: Long-term studies in animals to assess the carcinogenic potential of 9-*cis*-retinoic acid have not been conducted.

9-*cis*-Retinoic acid was not mutagenic in vitro (bacterial assays, Chinese hamster ovary cell HGPRT mutation assay) and was not clastogenic in vitro (chromosome aberration test in human lymphocytes) nor in vivo (mouse micronucleus test).

Pregnancy Category D (see "Warnings" section)

Nursing Mothers: It is not known whether alitretinoin or its metabolites are excreted in human milk. Because many drugs are excreted in human milk and because of the potential for adverse reactions from Panretin[®] gel in nursing infants, mothers should discontinue nursing prior to using the drug.

Pediatric Use: Safety and effectiveness in pediatric patients have not been established.

Geriatric Use: Inadequate information is available to assess safety and efficacy in patients age 65 years or older.

ADVERSE REACTIONS

The safety of Panretin[®] gel has been assessed in clinical studies of 385 patients with

AIDS-related KS. Adverse events associated with the use of Panretin[®] gel in patients with AIDS-related KS occurred almost exclusively at the site of application. The dermal toxicity begins as erythema; with continued application of Panretin[®] gel, erythema may increase and edema may develop. Dermal toxicity may become treatment-limiting, with intense erythema, edema, and vesiculation. Usually, however, adverse events are mild to moderate in severity; they led to withdrawal from the study in only 7% of the patients. Severe local (application site) skin adverse events occurred in about 10% of patients in the U.S. study (versus 0% in the vehicle control). Table 1 lists the adverse events that occurred at the application site with an incidence of at least 5% during the double-blind phase in the Panretin[®] gel-treated group and in the vehicle control group in either of the two controlled studies. Adverse events were reported at other sites but generally were similar in the two groups.

TABLE 1

Adverse Events with an Incidence of at Least 5% at the Application Site in Either Controlled Study in Patients Receiving Panretin[®] Gel or Vehicle Control

Adverse Event Term	Study 1		Study 2	
	Panretin [®] Gel N=134 Pts. %	Vehicle Gel N=134 Pts. %	Panretin [®] Gel N=36 Pts. %	Vehicle Gel N=46 Pts. %
Rash ¹	77	11	25	4
Pain ²	34	7	0	4
Pruritus ³	11	4	8	4
Exfoliative dermatitis ⁴	9	2	3	0
Skin disorder ⁵	8	1	0	0
Paresthesia ⁶	3	0	22	7
Edema ⁷	8	3	3	0

Includes Investigator terms:

¹ Erythema, scaling, irritation, redness, rash, dermatitis

² Burning, pain

³ Itching, pruritus

⁴ Flaking, peeling, desquamation, exfoliation

⁵ Excoriation, cracking, scab, crusting, drainage, eschar, fissure or oozing

⁶ Stinging, tingling

⁷ Edema, swelling, inflammation

DOSAGE AND ADMINISTRATION

Panretin[®] gel should initially be applied two (2) times a day to cutaneous KS lesions. The application frequency can be gradually increased to three (3) or four (4) times a day according to individual lesion tolerance. If application site toxicity occurs, the application frequency can be reduced. Should severe irritation occur, application of drug can be temporarily discontinued for a few days until the symptoms subside.

Sufficient gel should be applied to cover the lesion with a generous coating. The gel should be allowed to dry for three to five minutes before covering with clothing. Because unaffected skin may become irritated, application of the gel to normal skin surrounding the lesions should be avoided. In addition, do not apply the gel on or near mucosal surfaces of the body.

A response of KS lesions may be seen as soon as two weeks after initiation of therapy but most patients require longer application. With continued application, further benefit may be attained. Some patients have required over 14 weeks to respond. In clinical trials, Panretin[®] gel was applied for up to 96 weeks. Panretin[®] gel should be continued as long as the patient is deriving benefit.

Occlusive dressings should not be used with Panretin[®] gel.

OVERDOSAGE

There has been no experience with acute overdose of Panretin[®] gel in humans. Systemic toxicity following acute overdosage with topical application of Panretin[®] gel is unlikely because of limited systemic plasma levels observed with normal therapeutic doses. There is no specific antidote for overdosage.

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OBITUARIES

OBITUARY POLICY

Obituaries must be typed and no longer than 200 words. Please follow normal rules of capitalization - and no poetry. We reserve the right to edit for style, clarity, grammar, and taste.

If you're submitting a photo of the deceased, write their name on the back. If you include a SASE for the photo's return, write the person's name on the inside of the envelope flap. All obituaries must include a contact name and phone number. They must be submitted within a year of the death.

Deadline for obituaries is Monday at 5 p.m., with the exception of special display ad obituaries, which must be submitted by Friday at 3 p.m.

John R. Auman

John Auman died in his San Francisco home May 25, 1999.

John was strong minded and fierce of heart. He was a complex man, and gifted with wit and intelligence. Those of us fortunate enough to know him

well were the beneficiaries of his generous spirit and his capacity for unconditional support.

John will be missed by many. He will never fade from the hearts and minds of Bill Morgan and Jack Poblacki of San Francisco, and Carol Bouton, James Latus, and Craig McMillan, all of New York City.

Prior to moving to San Francisco in 1995, John resided in Manhattan and was a Vice President at Merrill Lynch & Co. John was a graduate of Franklin & Marshall College and of Northwestern University's Graduate School of Management.

Contributions in his memory may be made to The National AIDS Memorial Grove, 856 Stanyan St., San Francisco, CA 94117. John was deeply committed to "The Grove."

Plans for a celebration of John's life are pending. For information, please contact Bill at (415) 776-4976.

When we think of you, beloved friend, all losses are restored and sorrows end.

William A. Marchman

Many friends and neighbors will deeply miss Bill Marchman, who passed away on Sunday, 23 May, at age 69. Bill was a consummate creature of habit and possessed qualities that endeared him to those who came to know him: a truly



remarkable memory, a quick wit, and a gentle heart.

Bill's early career was characterized by his profound fondness and expertise in maritime matters. After leaving his native Tampa,

Florida, he underwent training at the U.S. Coast Guard Academy in New London, Connecticut, culminating in a commission as a Coast Guard navigator. His service with the Coast Guard in the Mediterranean and South Pacific fired his love of the sea and was a source in ensuing years of countless sea stories, including encounters with future kings, wizened Polynesian chiefs, and a pet monkey with a crack pitching arm. After leaving the Coast Guard, he completed his MBA at Columbia University and entered the burgeoning computer industry as a systems analyst with IBM, traveling and training primarily in the eastern U.S. He moved to San Francisco in 1961 after nearly accepting a job in Southern California, a decision he never regretted: San Francisco thrilled him. Some years before his death he looked out from the Crown Room and reckoned after living more than 30 years in San Francisco, he had still discovered only a tiny fraction of her charms.

After retirement, Bill enjoyed the company of friends in several favorite haunts and traveled extensively, in part at sea, where he always seemed most content. His kindness and good will were precious gifts to all who knew him.

John (Mancha) Akridge
December 27, 1967 - May 25, 1999

John was released from the body that no longer served him on Tuesday, May 25th. A man of love and dreams, he lived his life to its fullest capacity. He believed in who he was and the love he could

share with the world. He was a regular guest star performer, as the male lead in drag shows, both in San Jose and San Francisco. Headlined as "The Original Latin Bombshell," he supported many great queens on the road through the court system.

When John became disabled, he switched his creative talents to exquisite crafting creations. His sequin shows in a rainbow of colors. Genuine Genie Bottles, and detailed cross-stitch works once again displayed his inner beauty to the outside world.

This gentle man will be missed by all who knew him. John, thank you for marrying me and being my loving husband.

A celebration of John's life will be held on Saturday, June 12 at 1 p.m. at the Lakewood Apartment Club House at 515 John Muir Drive in San Francisco.

Donations in memory of John can be made to Quest Clinical Research, 2300 Sutter St., Suite 202, San Francisco, CA 94115.

Mikael Duden
August 1953 - July 1998

A highly regarded Bay Area actor, Mikael was proud to have been part of the underground gay theater of the early 1970s, when it was still stigmatized. Mikael performed with Theater Rhinoceros

in *Quisby's* which went on to great success at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. This performance won him a Bette Award, an achievement he repeated with his favorite role in *Snake in the Vein*. Mikael also opened in *Boys in the Band* and *Strictly a Formality* for which he won a Cable Car Award for Best Ensemble Actor. He also had the title roles in *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, and *Dracula* at various Bay Area theaters.

He is survived by his sisters Margie DeLuna and Lynette Gilbert, and his father Wayne Duden. He will be missed by many good friends.

Where's the community in community planning?

by Michael Lauro, ACT UP/
Golden Gate Writers Pool

Recently, Mayor Willie Brown announced a \$2 million HIV Prevention Initiative, seeded with \$1 million from DuPont Pharmaceuticals with the city of San Francisco matching that amount. The mayor stated that "the city will match DuPont Pharmaceuticals' grant in an effort to inspire other companies to follow their lead." The mayor hopes to raise another \$3 million from "other companies" for a minimum of \$5 million, to be spent over the next five years. At the May 4 press conference, the mayor stressed the need to target communities most at risk, including people of color, women, and young gay and bisexual men.

Whether it's \$2 million or \$5 million, this represents a significant pool of prevention funds to be dispersed. In 1997, by comparison, the last year for which complete information is available, the San Francisco Department of Public Health expended \$9,854,934 on HIV prevention from federal, state, and local sources. Over 90 percent of this money provided an array of interventions including HIV counseling, testing, referral, education, and outreach, primarily through the network of private HIV/AIDS agencies operating throughout the city. These same agencies certainly raise additional funds to support their own prevention services, although as one DPH staffer stated, "We've been trying for years to figure out what that total dollar amount is, without much success."

Almost lost amidst the fanfare, a new HIV prevention coalition is forming "to coordinate the initiative" by way of grants to already existing HIV prevention efforts and agencies as well as developing its own "innovative programs." Currently, under the San Francisco HIV Prevention Plan, DPH doles out the money after the community-based HIV Preven-

tion Planning Council (HPPC) sets out priorities for these resource allocations. Over 30 community-based agencies and community representatives sit on the HPPC.

Who, what, and how?

Several interesting - if not troublesome - points regarding the Brown-DuPont announcement merit closer scrutiny, however.

The first is the relationship between this new coalition and the existing HPPC. It's unclear what the precise relationship will be, if any, between HPPC and the "HIV Prevention Initiative" coalition. Early published articles stressed that the money would be "administered and awarded by a three-person committee." However, in a press release issued from the mayor's office, it states that "the initiative will be coordinated by a coalition of participating organizations (presumably AIDS organizations), members of the San Francisco Department of Public Health, and community leaders."

Indeed, some HPPC members are privately expressing concern over whether this new coalition is another of Brown's end-runs around the community planning process. They point to the well-publicized current controversy happening at HPPC's sister advisory board, the HIV Health Services Planning Council, where the mayor has tried to reign in the independence of that body more than once through a variety of means. That council prioritizes and allocates funds for AIDS/HIV services through the Ryan White CARE Act (as opposed to HIV prevention efforts). The mayor's office has gone so far as to refer to that body as "the Mayor's HIV/AIDS Planning Council," in previous years.

The time-tested community planning process embodied within the CARE Council is mandated by the federal act that created it. Unfortunately, our local

HIV/AIDS prevention process is not as insulated from acts of political interference, and this new prevention initiative further corrodes that independence.

The pleasure of the mayor

The offices of Dr. Tom Coates, one of the three co-chairs of the new prevention coalition, stated that "the degree of collaboration as opposed to coordination with HPPC is still unclear" and that "the mechanism has not been decided yet."

What seems very clear at this early point is that this new coalition will work independently of the HPPC. The question of what the composition of that body will look like is just one still undecided - or at least, unannounced - issue. Given that these new members of this far less independent body will be both appointed by, and serve at the pleasure of, the mayor, any appropriate mechanism must insure that the independent voices of the PWA/HIV community as represented in the HPPC are at the same table with the experts and the bureaucrats.

For that to happen, the mayor's office must hear from us. Phone the Mayor's Office of AIDS & HIV Policy at (415) 554-5101 and insist that the mayor genuinely engage our community in a process that is fair and inclusive.

Sustained by Sustiva

The other troublesome issue is the real cost at which this new initiative comes. Reeling from the vocal attacks by AIDS activists around the world, DuPont was sorely in need of a public relations makeover. It seems that Mayor Brown was eager to oblige and will even be calling on other pharmaceutical companies to sweeten this new prevention pot.

That the DuPont grant of \$1 million comes from the profit of its overpriced AIDS drug, Sustiva, is beyond question. Sustiva sells for about \$4,850 a year. Its main marketing advantages of once-daily dosing and the possibility of substituting Sustiva for protease inhibitors in anti-HIV combination therapies is not lost on its

page 22 ►

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8 daze, 7 naakts

by Jim Provenzano

finally received a copy of *8 Days of Friendship, Gay Games Amsterdam 1998*, the official memorial book of the biggest Gay Games yet. After the publishers asked me to print an order form

in the review (that's called an advertisement in our country) but didn't send a copy, I pretty much forgot about it. Perhaps my pernicious former employers didn't forward that hefty piece of mail. Who can say? Fortunately, one of my kindly benefactors offered me his copy.

Five photographers from Germany, the Netherlands, Spain, and the U.S. have documented a diverse array of sports and cultural events from Amsterdam, where as some of you recall, all sorts of things went on!

Faye Jenkins, a featured writer in the *Daily Friendship* Gay Games newsletter, wrote the cheerful present-tense account, which includes interviews and descriptions in that charming style: "It is the first time that, a lesbian and gay film program has been presented in the open air! The audience, sharing bottles of wine and relaxing together, nevertheless watch with rap attention."

The cheerfully revisionist text describes the Closing Ceremonies performance of two Montreal male-pairs figure skaters (Konstantin Miranov and Stephane Vachon) while completely omitting the fact that their little number was a choreographed form of protest to the "Oops! No medals!" idiocy surrounding their event. But as they say, good times anyway, ya? Party, party, party.

Cultural and sports events are vividly captured with an air of

spontaneity, with the exception of Tom Bianchi's photographing two male wrestlers – including Golden Gate's own Eric Richter – in the same style as his recent erotica book, *In the Studio*, with the artist looming in the background through a mirror. With over 50 matches, you'd think he'd have been able to capture a non-posed moment that didn't just mimic his own product. (Eroticizing wrestling is, like, redundant, okay?).

Since there are no page numbers (I'm not going to count them, since I'm sure – like the number of sports at GGV – the numbers probably fluctuate according to "Norwegian Rules") we'll have to trust the web ad (<http://www.gaygames.org/GGV/thebook.html>) which claims 160. You also can't identify folks featured in this full-color gift book, since there are no photo captions.

It is, however, a splashy collage (Dadaist, perhaps?) of festive imagery from what will be remembered as the most controversial yet diverse, Euro-inclusive Gay Games ever.

The back section includes updated and apparently accurate scores for team and individual medalists – at least those who received medals.

I was hoping to recommend buying or ordering *8 Days* at A Different Light Bookstore, but they too have yet to receive the copies they ordered. Hmmm.

They do have a lot of other books, so please shop there – a lot!

Don't bother looking for *8 Days* on Amazon.com, which does offer the fabulous *Unity: A Celebration of Gay Games IV & Stonewall* Lisa Labrecque (Editor) for \$29.95 (Special Order).

Two previous Gay Games books, *A Sense of Pride: The Story of Gay Games II* (Roy M. Coe) and *The Women: Gay Games III, Vancouver, Canada: Celebration '90* (Cheryl A. Traendly) are out of print.

You can probably order *8 Days* through the publisher (Bieber Consultants BV, Paramaribostraat 57, 1058 VG Amsterdam, the Netherlands phone +31-20-616 62 88, e-mail bieber@euronet.nl), but as many GGV participants can attest, those folks can be a bit recalcitrant in communications, even when money is offered. Furthermore, I don't think any proceeds from this book go to the Federation of Gay Games, or to pay off that lingering huge-ass debt.

8 Days costs 62.50 in Dutch guilders, plus 14.50 for shipping, which at the current exchange rate, translates to about a million dollars, U.S. ▼



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SFAF

◀ page 4

me. You don't know about gay male sex."

Batting clean-up was Dana Van Gorder, the Department of Public Health (DPH) coordinator for lesbian and gay health services. "I want to commend the board, staff, and Pat [Christen] for the piece in the *Chronicle*. It's the beginning of a much-needed discussion in San Francisco. Gay men are having a difficult time having conversations around serostatus. It's time for us to have a dialogue with gay men about how to take care of one another."

Neither the board nor Christen had any comments following the public testimony.

Board members and guests

then broke into small groups and heard presentations on a variety of indicators of the AIDS epidemic, both in San Francisco and the U.S. All of the material was sourced and easy to understand. It included information on current estimates of HIV in San Francisco, based on DPH's 1997 HIV Consensus Report, AIDS cases in the city, hepatitis B and rectal gonorrhea rates in the city, state and federal HIV/AIDS-related legislation and spending, HIV-related housing issues, and AIDS Drug Assistance Program (ADAP) drug information. ▼

SFAF's next public board meeting takes place Thursday, June 24 starting at 5:30 p.m. at 995 Market Street. To attend or speak, call (415) 487-3053.

ACT UP

◀ previous page

makers, DuPont Pharmaceuticals. Similar drugs in the same class (non-nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitors) are priced as low as \$3,100 a year.

The difference means that for many PWAs in many states and in many other countries, AIDS drug assistance programs will fall far short of what's needed to keep people alive. Or more accurately, far short of the high price tag DuPont

has created for its new drug.

Glen Hillson of the Canadian Treatment Advocates Council said of DuPont's pricing of Sustiva that, "AIDS drugs are already far too costly, and now the drug companies are escalating the problem."

Given that DuPont's "generous gift" is borne on the backs and the bodies of persons with AIDS around the world, the very least that our mayor can do is ensure that the community-based HPPC be brought fairly into this process. Blood money should be able to afford that. ▼

WHEELS OF FORTUNE

AIDS Ride

◀ page 13

Project. Giambalvo states, "When a person completes a program in Werner Erhard's Network, they are led to believe that he or she creates his/her reality and 'can have it all.' To keep that magical thinking, one has to disconnect with the people in their life that don't think that way."

Similarly, AIDS riders are encouraged to avoid debates over the financial problems of the Ride, and focus on the goal of completing the Ride, getting more sponsors and more money. They are repeatedly told their experience is transformational, and that their lives will never be the same.

This passage in Erhard's biography furthers that sentiment. "A transformed individual demands transformed relationships because only in such a context can he or she naturally express a transformed individuality."

Erhard says, "An effective siege on Mind cannot be directed only to the individual, as in the training, but must be directed to relationships and to the social environment, too. Thus, the larger est program has a revolutionary goal: to create the conditions — the space, the context — in the larger community to foster transformation at each level."

Or the manufacturing of "a life-changing event."

Some karmic thing

The Hunger Project's Holmes's motivational speeches even bear a similarity to the motivational jargon of AIDS Rides:

"Raise the bar. You didn't think you could go over it how high you raised it last time? You went over it. You're a champion. Raise it. Up the ante. Press yourself into more brilliance. You've just begun. We've just begun. We've got a long way to go. You're beautifully trained. You've put yourself together well. Deliver on the promise. Raise the ante. And go for it. You need to raise the targets. You need to increase the gradient. You're on a very high gradient. Don't get off. It would be very dangerous to you. Things will get very messed up for you if you do that."

At the same time as speeches are made about riders "risking their lives" on dangerous highways, supportive rhetoric is also ingrained to prevent rider dropout, a common problem that

Haley concedes he was trained to gloss over. Potential rider pledges are often used as the totals announced, not the actual dollars ever collected.

Singer questions the use of the enormous funds donated. "Supposedly the year that I did it, they raised \$9.5 million. I was trying to find answers about the money, it was very frustrating not being able to get the information." The information that did get out — from the Philadelphia lawsuit and failed rides — was either ignored or discounted by Pallotta staff.

Even a spokesman for sponsor Clif Bar, Dean Mayer, accused several gay newspapers' reports of problematic Rides as being "completely untrue" before this reporter mentioned which publications had critiqued the Ride.

"The individual has already been convinced that the group has the only answers and the outside world has lost its credibility," Giambalvo writes of The Hunger Project. "After all, the world does not really want to be transformed. In est and Forum seminars, we continually heard: If you don't share your transformation, (enrolling others) you will lose it. You need to be in a transformed environment, you need to be supported in doing 'the work.' You will lose your transformation if you leave."

Among the often-repeated statements of AIDS riders: "You don't understand it unless you do the Ride," echoing the exclusionary viewpoint of participants.

"The Pallotta Rides market to that experience. I hope it's some sort of karma thing. For people who have felt powerless, it is something they can do," said Suzie Becker, creator of the Massachusetts-based Ride FAR.

Kamsky, however, discounts the est-like aspects of the AIDS rides, and was by no means "converted." Her experience was more of boredom from the staged pageant-like events.

"They had hours of speeches," she said. "Presumably they were saying, 'Look what these people did!' But we were in a staging area a mile away."

She found inspiration from individual participants. "Passing by a rider, they have a picture of someone on their handle bars. You know these people are dead. That's what kept me going, real people who faced this."

Yet, she discounts the "vision" that riding will end AIDS. "Nothing really changed because I rode my bike. Some percentage of the

money went to people who really needed it."

Still, she remembers the glory of participating. "Watching it on *Good Morning America*, I saw myself for a millisecond. If that's what'll get more media attention, more power to them."

Guru mentality

But media attention to what end? *A Bay Windows* editorial questioned the motive, if not the earnest goals, of riders. "AIDS Riders, wonderful people that they are, ought to examine their goals and motivations for pedaling in this annual event ... an admirable accomplishment that proves stamina, commitment and courage. But commitment to what and to whom?"

For the disenchanting, it's more about Pallotta than AIDS. "I see more Dan Pallotta's influence as some kind of guru," said Singer. "The people working on it have a sort of adoration. I thought that was stupid."

This is a pattern that pervades est-derived groups and its similar "religion," the Church of Scientology and its founder L. Ron Hubbard. Members of both groups are known for their devotion to founders, litigious and personal attacks on critics and ex-members, infiltration in highly placed industry positions, and denial in admitting ties to such groups.

Singer also saw in the AIDS Rides what Giambalvo notes as a common pattern of such groups, a highly hierarchical structure. "Not so much people doing the Ride, but the ones running it, just that whole organizations stuff, that the people at the top are un-

approachable," he said. "I thought it was ridiculous." To Singer, the people at the top were somehow imbued with "the guru mentality."

Despite these misgivings, Singer raised \$5,000, but "another reason I haven't done the Ride again is that I don't think that money did anything. It was hard to ask people for it, but at the time, people didn't ask a lot of questions, they weren't really curious about where the money was going. A lot of people that sponsored me were from out of state. They just trusted me, and that's what I felt weird about."

Giambalvo alleges that the information given in a Hunger Project briefing was "displayed in a way that allows the Mind to be by-passed because your Mind is fed by information. The Briefing delivers it [transformation] camouflaged in a legitimate package called education or information."

Similarly, the AIDS Ride is repeatedly credited as "raising awareness for AIDS," when in actuality, public information about the AIDS Ride includes neither safe sex information, information about HIV treatments, nor AIDS statistics or information about AIDS groups, other than the recipients of the Ride. Condoms are certainly not doled out to grandmothers and children on road-sides.

It should also be noted that the other recipient in the California AIDS Ride is the Los Angeles Gay and Lesbian Community Center, whose primary purpose is not as an AIDS service agency.

"That's how the est thing comes in," Singer said. "They make it out to be something that

it's not."

Secret weapon

By 1990, The Hunger Project initiated a program called Youth Ending Hunger (YEAH), a campaign for the Ending Hunger Briefing Program which targeted school children.

Giambalvo quotes a speech by The Hunger Project's Joan Holmes on how to convert eager teens to their cause: "Brief young people in a way so that the commitment to end hunger is located in them. And you know how irritating they can be. So, if they want something, they're going to get it, aren't they? I mean, they're ruthless people, and I consider it the kind of secret weapon of The Hunger Project to unleash them on the world."

Youth as well are riding in the California AIDS Ride. One such 16-year-old, heterosexual but clutching a Tinky Winky doll to show his support of gays, as well as an AIDS Ride pledge sheet, recently approached a San Francisco-based former AIDS Ride administrator. Although the former worker is disgruntled by the financial aspects of the Rides — "Just give your money directly to the AIDS group," he usually urges, "the goal of making 75 cents on the dollar has rarely been made" — he was touched, and signed on as a sponsor.

He told the B.A.R., "He believes in what he's doing." ▼

The California AIDS Ride 6 begins this Sunday morning, June 6, at Fort Mason Center in San Francisco.

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STATMENT FILE NO. 231333

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MAY 13, 20, 27, JUNE 3 1999

STATMENT FILE NO. 231434

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MAY 13, 20, 27, JUNE 3 1999

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA IN AND FOR THE COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO: FILE NO: 303324
In the Matter of the Application of Thomas Emanuel Ross. For Change of Name. The application of Thomas

Emanuel Ross, for change of name, having been filed in court, and it appearing from said application that Thomas Emanuel Ross has filed an application proposing that his name be changed to Thomas Emanuel Rosenberg. Now therefore, it is hereby ordered and directed, that all persons interested in said matter do appear before this Court in department X-4/206 on the 29th day of July, 1999, at 9:00 o'clock am., of said day to show cause why the application for change of name should not be granted.

MAY 13, 20, 27, JUNE 3 1999

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA IN AND FOR THE COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO: FILE NO: 303335

In the Matter of the Application of Michael Joseph Sieradzki. For Change of Name. The application of Michael Joseph Sieradzki for change of name, having been filed in court, and it appearing from said application that Michael Joseph Sieradzki has filed an application proposing that his name be changed to Michael Joseph Sarid. Now therefore, it is hereby ordered and directed, that all persons interested in said matter do appear before this Court in department X-4/206 on the 17th day of June, 1999, at 9:00 o'clock am., of said day to show cause why the application for change of name should not be granted.

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MAY 27, JUNE 3, 10, 17 1999

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA IN AND FOR THE COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO: FILE NO: 303642
In the Matter of the Application of William Do, For Change of Name. The application of William Do, for change of name, having been filed in court, and it appearing from said application that William Do has filed an application proposing that his name be changed to William Do Pham. Now therefore, it is hereby ordered and directed, that all persons interested in said matter do appear before this Court in department X-4/206 on the 1st day of July, 1999, at 9:00 o'clock a.m., of said day to show cause why the application for change of name should not be granted.
MAY 27, JUNE 3, 10, 17

STATEMENT OF ABANDONMENT OF USE OF FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME: FILE NO: 229995
The following person (persons) have abandoned the use of the fictitious business name known as: E-Central, 2358 Market Street San Francisco, CA. 94114. The fictitious business name referred to above was filed in the County of San Francisco on: 3/19/99. This business was conducted by: a individual David M Bach. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of San Francisco County on: 5/24/99.
MAY 27, JUNE 3, 10, 17 1999

STATEMENT FILE NO. 232004
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JUNE 3, 10, 17, 24 1999

STATEMENT FILE NO. 231976
The following person(s) are doing business as, Energy To Spare (ETS), 530-29th Avenue, San Francisco, CA. 94121. This business is conducted by an individual, signed Philip F. Schneider. The registrant(s) commenced to transact business under the above listed fictitious business name or names on 5/27/97. The statement was filed with the County Clerk of the City and County of San Francisco, CA on 05/27/99.
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MAY 27, JUNE 3, 10, 17 1999

STATEMENT FILE NO. 231860
The following person(s) are doing business as, E-Central, 2358 Market Street San Francisco, CA. 94114. This business is conducted by a general partnership, signed David Bach. The registrant(s) commenced to transact business under the above listed fictitious business name or names on 5/1/99. The statement was filed with the County Clerk of the City and County of San Francisco, CA on 05/24/99.
MAY 27, JUNE 3, 10, 17 1999

STATEMENT FILE NO. 231829
The following person(s) are doing business as, Ristorante Mereb, 598 Guerrero Street San Francisco, CA. 94110. This business is conducted by husband and wife, signed Woldeyesus A. Ogbiu and Hadas Kibrom. The registrant(s) commenced to transact business under the above listed fictitious business name or names on N/A. The statement was filed with the County Clerk of the City and County of San Francisco, CA on 05/21/99.
MAY 27, JUNE 3, 10, 17 1999

STATEMENT FILE NO. 231828
The following person(s) are doing business as, Mereb Market, 598 Guerrero Street San Francisco, CA. 94110. This business is conducted by husband and wife, signed Woldeyesus A. Ogbiu and Hadas Kibrom. The registrant(s) commenced to transact business under the above listed fictitious business name or names on 03/21/94. The statement was filed with the County Clerk of the City and County of San Francisco, CA on 05/21/99.
MAY 27, JUNE 3, 10, 17 1999

STATEMENT FILE NO. 231816

LEGAL NOTICES

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA IN AND FOR THE COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO: FILE NO: 303341
In the Matter of the Application of Leslie Booth Johnson. For Change of Name. The application of Leslie Booth Johnson for change of name, having been filed in court, and it appearing from said application that Leslie Booth Johnson has filed an application proposing that his name be changed to Bo Alexander Koch. Now therefore, it is hereby ordered and directed, that all persons interested in said matter do appear before this Court in department X-4/206 on the 17th day of June, 1999, at 9:00 o'clock a.m., of said day to show cause why the application for change of name should not be granted.
MAY 13, 20, 27, JUNE 3 1999

STATEMENT FILE NO. 231406
The following person(s) are doing business as, Van Koll Realty, 1767 41st Avenue San Francisco, CA. 94122. This business is conducted by an individual, signed Robert James Van Koll. The registrant(s) commenced to transact business under the above listed fictitious business name or names on 5/7/99. The statement was filed with the County Clerk of the City and County of San Francisco, CA on 05/07/99.
MAY 20, 27, JUNE 3, 10 1999

STATEMENT FILE NO. 231805
The following person(s) are doing business as, Stonewall Maintenance Company, 236 West Portal Avenue #240 San Francisco, CA. 94127. This business is conducted by a limited partnership, signed Matthew J. McCabe. The registrant(s) commenced to transact business under the above listed fictitious business name or names on 4/15/99. The statement was filed with the County Clerk of the City and County of San Francisco, CA on 05/20/99.

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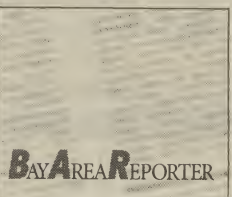
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LEGAL NOTICES

STATEMENT FILE NO. 231980

The following person(s) are doing business as Daniel Castor Editions, LLC, 65 Hill Street, Unit A, San Francisco, Ca. 94110. This business is conducted by a limited liability company, signed Daniel Castor. The registrant(s) commenced to transact business under the above listed fictitious business name or names on 5/03/99. The statement was filed with the County Clerk of the City and County of San Francisco, CA on 05/27/99.
JUNE 3, 10, 17, 24 1999

STATEMENT OF ABANDONMENT
OF USE OF FICTITIOUS BUSI-
NESS NAME: FILE NO: 0229756-00

The following person (persons) have abandoned the use of the fictitious business name known as: Daniel Castor Editions, 65 Hill Street, Unit A San Francisco, Ca. 94110. The fictitious business name referred to above was filed in the County of San Francisco on: 3/1/99. Name and Address of registrants: Robert Thompson, 2301 Vista Del Mar San Mateo, Ca. 94404, & Daniel Castor, 65 Hill Street, Unit A San Francisco, Ca. 94110. This business was conducted by: a General Partnership. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of San Francisco County on: 5/27/99.
JUNE 3, 10, 17, 24 1999

STATEMENT FILE NO. 232046
The following person(s) are doing business as,

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ness as, Storyline Productions, 930
Pierce Street, San Francisco, Ca.
94115. This business is conducted by a
general partnership, signed Daniel
Bruce Geller, 930 Pierce Street, San
Francisco, Ca. 94115. & Marshall Jay
Elsen, 665 Roble Avenue #1 Menlo
Park, Ca. 94025. The registrant(s) com-
menced to transact business under the
above listed fictitious business name or
names on 6/1/99. The statement was
filed with the County Clerk of the City
and County of San Francisco, CA on
06/01/99.
JUNE 3, 10, 17, 24 1999

STATEMENT FILE NO. 232047

The following person(s) are doing business as, Geller/Goldfine Productions, 930 Pierce Street, San Francisco, Ca. 94115. This business is conducted by a general partnership, signed Daniel Bruce Geller, 930 Pierce Street, San Francisco, Ca. 94115. & Dayna Lyn Goldfine, 930 Pierce Street, San Francisco, Ca. 94115. The registrant(s) commenced to transact business under the above listed fictitious business name or names on 6/1/99. The statement was filed with the County Clerk of the City and County of San Francisco, CA on 06/01/99.
JUNE 3, 10, 17, 24 1999

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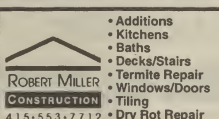
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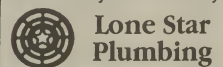
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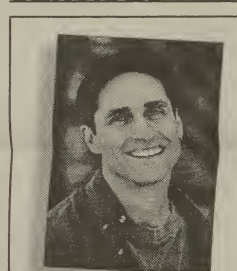
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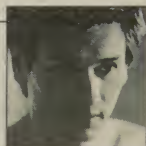
Remembering Steve Silver, as 'Beach Blanket Babylon' reaches its 25th year.

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Dry goods

Stanislas Merhar, Miou-Miou in 'Dry Cleaning.'

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Day-tripping

John Maybury's acid-tinged 'Read Only Memory.'

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BAY AREA REPORTER

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Vol. 29 • No. 22 • 3 June 1999



Illustration by Gil Kane, by kind permission of DC Comics

**It's a video!
It's a comic!
It's the 'Ring' cycle!**

Wagner's 16-hour spectacle, out of the Opera House

by Stephanie von Buchau

E all it arrogance, cluelessness or just a death wish, but several Bay Area arts organizations have programmed events to conflict with the opening of the most anticipated occasion on this year's classical music calendar, the San Francisco Opera's four cycles of Richard Wagner's *Der Ring des Nibelungen*. Check this out for hubris:

June 9 — Just as *Das Rheingold*, the first of four operas about incest and trollicide, unfolds at the War Memorial Opera House, KQED (Channel 9) airs an hilariously stirring documentary about the 1990 SFO *Ring* cycle, titled *Sing Faster: The Stagehands' Ring Cycle*. I think we can assume that the 3,100 people in the Bay Area who most want to see this program (to say nothing of the 150-plus participants in the film) will be in the opera house that night, either watching or working on *Rheingold*. KQED's comment: "They can tape it."

That same evening, Kent Nagano and the Berkeley Symphony present the one and only live performance of Philippe Manoury's 1997 opera, *60th Parallel*, with orchestra, electronics and nine soloists (Zellerbach Hall, UC Berkeley). It's true that Nagano-san's scheduling problems are daunting, like those of the late Herbert von Karajan, who, when asked by a taxi driver "Where to?" replied, "They want me everywhere!" Still ... maybe BSO thinks we don't care; someone who declined to be quoted suggested that Wagnerites might not be interested in "the avant garde." Newsflash: when he was alive, Wagner was the avant garde.

June 10 — The *Ring*'s second evening, *Die Walküre*, just happens to collide with the opening night of the San Francisco Symphony's Stravinsky Festival (Davies Symphony Hall). Possibly SFS thinks it is doing us a favor by scheduling the rest of the two-week festival so that Wagnerites can actually attend symphony events, should our *Sitzfleisch* hold up for 6/9 Wagner, 6/10 Wagner, 6/11 Stravinsky, 6/13 Wagner, 6/14 Stravinsky, 6/16 Wagner, 6/17 and 6/19 Stravinsky. Great if you are from out of town and can sleep all day; not so great for those of us who work for a living. Never mind sleeping, when are we supposed to shop, vacuum the house or change the kitty litter?

Okay, so that is a problem only for culture vultures who have tickets to the first *Ring* cycle. What about those who have no tick-

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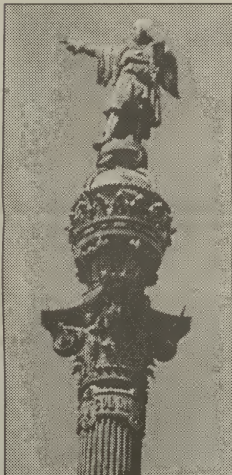
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by Roberto Friedman
and Spanish Fly

Five hundred years after they kicked the Jews out of Spain, we returned — last week, for an in-depth investigation into the burning issues of Spanish wine, art, and men. We found all three areas of inquiry held up quite remarkably, even if we ourselves were a gelatinous mess by the end.

Spaniards are on a different clock. They regularly don't have supper until sometime "round midnight," so we survived by hanging around tapas bars and ordering by a method we called "point-and-click," gesturing to a snack (olives, caviar, the ubiquitous ham) we think looked good, and washing it down with creamy *cava* (Spanish champers). Bartenders in España will shake their head and insist you do not want the brand of champagne you just ordered, then bring you their own choice. And of course they were right.

Yes, we hit all the requisite sights in Barcelona — toured Gaudí modernism architecture and the Museo Picasso, strolled the Barri Gòtic and the Ramblas down past the birdstalls to the port quarter. At the harbor, a huge statue of Columbus points the way to the New World — except he's pointing in the opposite di-



Columbus in Barcelona



A Spaniard passes by the Museu d'Art Contemporani in Barcelona.

rection. Well, it's the idea that counts. In the market, we gaped at amazing piles of supposedly edible innards, and squid heads the size of babies. Later, our friend the website journalist amused us by ordering whole squid faces at the bar and devouring them in a gulp.

We made new friends in the Plaça Pi who took us home to their barri, Barceloneta, for an authentic experience. We went to a fisherman's bar for beer and fresh sardines, and were sitting by the door when a shirtless neighborhood youth burst in, shoved us aside and vaulted over the bar, fleeing through the back door from a policeman who followed in hot pursuit, knocking over drinks and nibbles, billyclub

swinging.

It was a little too much local color for us, and our new friends were deeply embarrassed, insisting this was a rare display.

But we agreed with them that, as opposed to back in the U.S. of A., at least the cops here carried no guns. To get our equilibrium back, we had to sit on the playa, watch the Mediterranean roll in, and smoke a hash cigarette or two.

Back uptown, we went to the gay

showclub, and the Café Dietrich. Everyone there was hip and stylish in that Catalán way, and they use ice in their drinks, which puts them one up on the British. At the Thermos Sauna, there's a pool, jacuzzi, cold plunge, bar, and rooms that lock — but in a way, it's less "private" than SF sex clubs, because the men are being so perpetually social and chatty — and smoking, all the time, including in the sauna! The establishment does, however, provide "Tu Y Yo" *profylacticos*.

Forget olive oil and muscatel, España has such a surfeit of beautiful dark-eyed men, she could safely export half of them and still have a full supply. Their faces are lined with sun and character. They speak a rapid Spanish in deep, chesty voices. We wanted to smuggle one home through customs, but he wouldn't fit in our bags.

Out There



Cabeza de Muchacho, by Picasso

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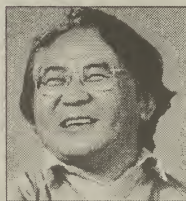
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INTERVIEW

Déjà vu all over again

Talking with 'Key West' playwright Jack Heifner

by Richard Dodds

Jack Heifner, author of a "clothing optional" comedy opening this week, is a playwright with post-partum frustrations. The prolific playwright and part-time college instructor was stuck in a small Texas town preparing for finals as his new play *Key West* went into rehearsals at the New Conservatory Theatre Center.

"I've never had a new script go into rehearsals and previews without my being there," Heifner said recently from Nacogdoches, Texas. "I'm sure I'm going to be a bit of a mess when I do get to San Francisco."

Key West will be Heifner's fifth play done at New Conservatory, which staged a male version of his huge hit *Vanities* in addition to *A Boy's Play*, *Heartbreak*, and *Comfort and Joy*. *Key West* will be the first one to have its world premiere at NCTC. "It's been a difficult play for me to write for some reason," he said, "so I really want to get there and see what I've got."

Early audiences got to see the play before its author did, who arrived after previews had begun. "They scheduled a long preview period so I can make some changes," Heifner said, "but I don't see myself throwing out an act. So far I haven't heard anything bad from the director."

Ed Decker, founder and artistic director of New Conservatory, is staging *Key West*, and it was he who asked Heifner for a new work to close out the current Pride Season of gay plays. "I know he wanted something fun," the playwright said, "but I can't really write a goofy play that's not about something. It may be more serious than he wanted."

Nudity is a given in this play, which takes place at a clothing-optional gay resort in *Key West*, although it was not specifically requested by Decker. "But having done four other plays at New Conservatory, I happen to know what sells," Heifner said. "One of the plays, *Heartbreak*, didn't have anyone taking off their clothes, and no one came to see it. I've never written anything before that was calculated to get them out of their clothes, but I thought the very nature of the resort at least makes it part of the environment."

The play focuses on the occupants of two guest houses, where friendships are tested, romances are explored, and memories are rattled. "I named the place where they are staying the *Déjà Vu* because there are a lot of memories for old friends who have come back to *Key West*. I was trying to deal with feeling good about yourself as you get older."

Key return

To seek inspiration for the play, Heifner himself returned to *Key West* for the first time since the disco '70s, when he was a young playwright with a hit play, *Vanities*, which followed three girlfriends from high school to college to very different adulthoods, brought the Texas native sudden fame and fortune when it opened a long run off-Broadway in 1976.

"That was a pretty miraculous time for me," Heifner said. "I spent all the money, but I had a

good time."

Heifner had already come out by the time *Vanities* opened, though it's only in his later plays that he began to explore gay characters and themes. "I've never considered myself a gay writer," he said. "I am a writer who is gay. I would like to think I can write whatever I want to write."

Heifner, who's in his early 50s, has written several times about small-town Texas, and he thinks there are probably a couple of more Texas plays in him. He grew up in Corsicana, Texas, where he had a boyfriend from age 13 through college. They'd sleep together after they dropped their dates off.

"When I first got to SMU, I played the frat-guy game," he said. "It was a bit of a double life, going to the gay bars in Dallas and also being the straight preppy guy at school. I found it exciting to be an SMU boy running around with these older men in the gay com-

munity. We were very sought after. I went to a lot of parties. I was working it."

He graduated from SMU in 1968, but didn't head to New York for another five years. All he knew was that he wanted to be in the theater, and he worked both backstage and as an actor. In his spare time, he wrote a play and then another. The second one was *Vanities*, and the first production was like an SMU reunion. Fellow classmates involved included actress Kathy Bates, director Garland Wright, and producer Milton Justice.

Heifner, Wright, and Justice were also a team on Heifner's first and only Broadway production, the short-lived *Patio/Porch* in 1978. It was the beginning of a dry spell for Heifner. "You begin to think it was all some sort of accident and that you will never write anything successful again," he said.

But Heifner persevered, and

now has 25 plays to his credit. While none has come close to matching the success of *Vanities*, he believes many to be vastly superior to his early hit. "It was the right play at the right time," he said of *Vanities*, "but now when I look at it, I just think it is so simplistic."

Director Garland Wright died last year after a long battle with cancer, and Heifner found himself thinking about his old friend while he was writing *Key West*. "He lived in my apartment during his last two years, and I was one of his primary caretakers during all that," Heifner said. "I think there is a sense of growing older and of things passing that have found their way into the play. But I did not want to write a play about people dying. I wanted this to be a play full of hope. Older men are attractive and can get younger men, or whatever it is they want."


Heifner paused to consider what he had just said. "I'm not



Jack Heifner


sure that's true. Maybe it's a fairy tale. I don't know. At this point, I don't have any idea of what I've written." ▼

Key West will run at New Conservatory Theatre Center through July 17. Tickets are \$16-\$20. Call 861-8972.



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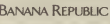
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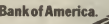
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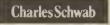
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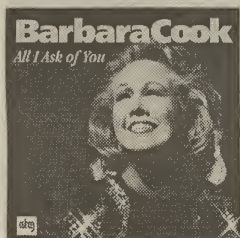
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Premature Tony syndrome

by John F. Karr

Spring to me has always been when the Original Cast Albums appear, and summer starts when the Tony Awards are on TV. But before looking at the recordings of the shows vying for this year's Tonys, let's pause and present a Lifetime Achievement Award to Barbara Cook.



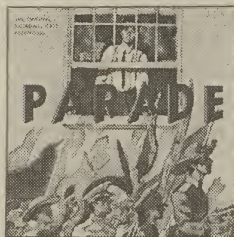
Lacking a clear center, or some thematic linkage, Barbara Cook's *All I Ask of You*, on the DRG label, skips by a bit too easily. This impression is abetted perhaps by the rather shallow recording of the full orchestra that accompanies her, and by the fact that with two songs as well as a 12-minute *She Loves Me* medley that Barbara has recorded previously, there's not much over a half-hour of new material. That said, Barbara sounds great, singing nimbly, lightly, with grace, humor, and the wisdom of her years — as well as the high C she unveiled when *She Loves Me* opened 35 years ago! She's meltingly lovely on

"Somewhere," achingly lovely on a revisit to "In Buddy's Eyes," and haunting on a valedictory "We'll Be Together Again." Other new material includes the big ballad from *Phantom of the Opera*, and Harold Arlen's "I Wonder What Became of Me." The album is a lovely visit with a cherished star, who sounds, wondrously, like she'll never say goodbye.



And now to present the Best Musical Award, with the handicap of not having seen any of the shows. It's impossible to judge *Fosse* from its RCA Victor cast recording, which might be a good souvenir for those who've seen the dance anthology. But on CD, the endless noodling of the dance arrangements, served up by cheesy synthesizers, makes for a lot of padding. Its performers lack star power, and the orchestra lacks the snap of the original recordings. It all sounds dutifully learned and professionally performed.

Not so *Parade*, also on RCA Victor. This is the most surprising debut of a theatre composer



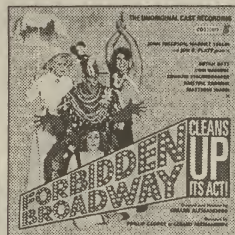
I've heard since *Anyone Can Whistle*. Jason Roberts Brown's score is an enthralling procession of exciting ensembles and passionate solos, presented with smashing performances and impressive orchestral arrangements (some of them even bringing Charles Ives to Broadway!). The musical is about the 1915 lynching of a falsely accused Jewish man by an hysterical vigilante mob, and takes every advantage for musical drama in probing the causes and results of the event. Clearly the Best New Musical, it's also a memorable recording, making you eager to see a production of the show.

Big guns

Which is the exact opposite of the effect provided by the new *Annie Get Your Gun*, an Angel CD, starring Bernadette Peters and Tom Wopat. Perhaps it's because the revised script presents the central relationship as a play-within-a-play, but the stars seem to skim their material as if this were a revue; this revival lacks the cohesion heard on the classic Lin-



coln Center *Annie*, on RCA Victor. Bernadette seems to stand outside the role, playing cute, with a backwoods accent that comes and goes. Even her fine singing on the ballads sounds uncommitted. And though Mr. Wopat may be easy on the eye, he's a bit too easy on the ear, especially since "My Defenses Are Down" has been neutered into a lounge routine. Despite Wopat's casual charm, I miss the virile high baritone sound his predecessors brought to the role. Still, here's a hit parade of a score, with two undeniable stars and a recording whose sound has front-row seat impact.



Those three shows are the big guns on Broadway. But you'll have lots of fun with a lesser entrée, the DRG recording of *Forbidden Broadway Cleans Up Its*

Act! This is the fifth *Forbidden Broadway*, but the show's parody lyrics are freshly acute zingers. I especially like the *Chicago* satire: "Give 'em the old glossy Fosse," it says. "Though the production may be shoddy, Everyone likes a naked body." There's an hysterical Ann Miller send-up, "I'm Still Weird," a really nasty roast of *Ragtime* that had me rolling, and a well-deserved dig at you-know-who, "Super-Frantic-Hyper-Active-Self-Indulgent-Mandy," given a swell performance by Bryan Batt. And if, like me, the handsome Batt gives you a boner, there's a picture of him in the booklet with his shirt off.

Other new cast albums include the rather irritatingly brash collision with Cole Porter called *High Society*, a DRG recording. Originally a more gracious movie musical with classy songs representing classy people, this stage version substitutes class for class. It pushes and prods the songs, speeds everything up, and asks the performers to force their effects. And then there's *Fame*, also on the DRG label, which, like the current *Footloose*, makes me look forward to the day when they don't write them like this anymore. Only the title tune remains from the movie. The new songs are aerobic workouts and shapeless ballads, sung off-key (the kids) and harsh (the teachers). Help!

Finally, please treat yourself to the warmly symphonic recording of *110 in the Shade*, a Jay double CD. It's not complete, and vibrantly conducted. The current stars are neither as passionate (her) or sexy (him) as the original cast, but they sing fabulously, and the score is glorious. They really don't write them like this anymore. Pity. ▼

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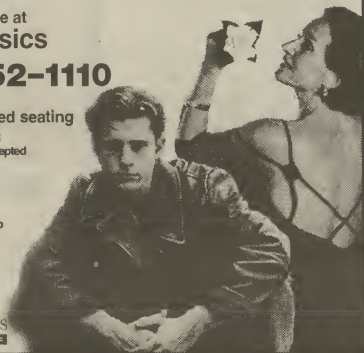
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THEATRE

Silver lining

'Beach Blanket Babylon' turns 25

by Richard Dodds

The street sign at the corner of Green and Stockton uses a small prosthetic device to help support the extra words. For one block, Green Street gives up its name to Beach Blanket Babylon Boulevard, one case where renaming a street didn't cause a fuss. Maybe that's because the boulevard's namesake attraction fills the block eight times a week with smiling faces.

That was certainly the case at a recent performance of *Beach Blanket Babylon*, which will celebrate its 25th anniversary on June 7 with a special performance at the Herbst Theatre. At Club Fugazi, the show's longtime home, the out-of-towners may have outnumbered the locals, but the cast wasn't in any worn-out tourist-trap mode. For 90 minutes, the capacity crowd of 400 sat in grinning awe as the cast piloted the revue of visual puns, parody songs, outlandish characters, and big hats as if it were an SST.

In some ways it always has been an SST — a Steve Silver Transport. Silver, a native San Franciscan, created the first version of *Beach Blanket Babylon* back in 1974 for \$800. Practically overnight, the unfocused street-smart entrepreneur had a full-time — and as it turned out, life-time — career.

Silver learned he was HIV-positive in 1984 and kept it a secret until the illness became full-blown six years later. Even then, he told only his closest friends and colleagues, finally sharing the unhappy news with his cast (and the world) in 1994, when his famous overdrive energy began to fail. Silver was 51 when he died on June 12, 1995.

"To me, he and the show are the same thing," said Kenny Mazlow, who became the show's artistic director following Silver's death. "Steve Silver is *Beach Blanket Babylon*, and *Beach Blanket Babylon* is Steve Silver."

But Silver very much wanted the show to live on as his legacy, and as he felt his time growing short, began putting into place a set of successors. Mazlow, who joined the show as a performer in 1988 before becoming the show's assistant director and choreographer, was given more and more responsibilities before Silver's death.

Although Mazlow was one of the first people Silver told about his illness, it was not a topic to which the fiercely private Silver frequently returned. "I never knew what was happening," Mazlow said. Did it feel as if Silver was passing on the reins? "It's still hard to accept him not being here," he said, "so it's hard to answer that question."

Reverent relevance

It's unlikely that many among current *Beach*-goers realize the reverence that fuels the on-stage zaniness. Silver has been dead for nearly four years, but those who have been carrying on in his absence show little interest in putting their own stamp on the show, even when the topical show must be adjusted to reflect recent headlines.

"What would Steve do?" has become the mantra that guides the creative team headed by Mazlow and Jo Schuman Silver. "And we all still try to make him laugh,"

Mazlow said. "I very much do feel his presence. It's not like a voodoo thing where I'm trying to channel him, but there are qualities that he had that have become a part of me."

Mazlow was sitting in the Club Fugazi balcony while on stage below, Schuman Silver was checking out the costume on a Monica Lewinsky look-alike. Schuman Silver had been Steve Silver's best friend since 1982, but it was still a surprise when they married just months before his death. He left the show to her, and she now carries the title of producer of *Beach Blanket Babylon*.

Many assumed Silver was gay, though it was an issue that apparently remained unresolved for him and certainly not a subject he wished to address publicly. There's little that is overtly gay in the current edition of *Beach Blanket Babylon*, although there is an Ellen DeGeneres sight gag, as well as the swishing King Louis character that has been a staple for years.

At times, perceptions of *Beach Blanket Babylon* have led to disappointment. When the show traveled to London in 1997, the theater critic for the *Financial Times* wrote, "If you expect the gay community to present a musical heaving with bitchy innuendo and salacious gossip, wise up: *Beach Blanket Babylon* is about as malicious as Bambi."

Mazlow, who is gay, figures some of that reputation evolved simply because the show hails from San Francisco. "When the show opened," he said, "it had a heavy gay following because the gay community is so supportive of new and different things, but over the years the audience has become very mainstream. The show itself never tries to be a gay show or a straight show."

Although Mazlow recalls the naysayer in the *Financial Times*, he prefers to quote from the critic in *The Times* of London. "He wrote that *Beach Blanket Babylon* unlocks the feel-good factor in all of us," Mazlow said. "I really believe that."

Audiences arrive keyed for a good time, and the fast-paced, high-energy show delivers. Keeping the cast fresh isn't that big a challenge, Mazlow said. "For the most part, the performers love what they do," he said. "And since we're sold out every night, once those curtains open, you can feel that energy coming from the audience."

It also helps that the show is subject to change, and Silver's successors are always on the look out for something in the news that might find a laugh on stage. "The whole cast gets so excited when some new scandal breaks," Mazlow said. "They ask, 'Can we do something on it?'" Silver had a heyday in the early '90s with bits about Tonya Harding and Nancy Kerrigan, Joey Buttafucio and Amy Fisher, and the Bobbitts. "Thank God for the whole Clinton thing," Mazlow said. "That gave us a year. It's almost run its course, so we're waiting for another good scandal."

Snow job

The show continues to use the basic framework of Snow White's search for her prince, and a lot of the material remains as Silver created it. That's true of Babylon veteran Val Diamond's characters, and

such familiar figures as Mr. Peanut, a disco-era John Travolta, the prancing poodles, and King Louis.

King Louis is one of Mazlow's signature characters, though as his artistic duties have increased, he's been spending more time off-stage. His outlandish take on Barbra Streisand was another of his characters, and it helped get him a job with *Beach Blanket Babylon*.

The native of Winnipeg had moved to Toronto at the first chance, where he figured he'd make his career in the theater. But he landed a role in a production headed for Las Vegas, and that became his home for the next eight years. Ready for a change, he moved to Los Angeles and one night was cutting up in bar, doing his impression of Barbra Streisand in *Yentl*. Steve Silver was there, and he asked Mazlow to audition for *Beach Blanket Babylon*.

"I felt an amazing connection with Steve Silver," Mazlow said. "I was so calm with this person. It was like I had always known him. He asked me when my birthday was, and I said June 7. He said that's the birthday of *Beach Blanket Babylon*. I believe there are no accidents."

Mazlow was first cast in a condensed Las Vegas version of the show, playing Mr. Peanut and Liberace. "Steve would love to see performers on the edge," he said. "He told me one night to go out and do my celebrity impressions, but he didn't tell anyone else. And

Kenny Mazlow as swishing King Louis in *Beach Blanket Babylon*

then I was supposed to fly as Liberace, but my outfit got hooked up on the rig and it looked like laundry hanging out to dry. I heard him in the audience screaming with laughter."

Mazlow is now preoccupied with the special performance at Herbst Theatre, which will include cameo appearances by DiAnne Feinstein as Snow White, George Shultz as Superman, Charlotte Shultz as Wonder Woman, Ann Getty as the Pineapple Queen, and Willie Brown as himself. Proceeds from that performance will benefit the Young Conservatory at American Conservatory Theater and the UCSF

Cancer Center. Performances through the rest of June will benefit 24 other Bay Area nonprofit organizations.

The Herbst show will open with a tribute to Steve Silver, who was ailing but present when a similar celebration was held to mark the show's 20th birthday in 1994.

"It was amazing to watch him deal with his illness," Mazlow said. "He never wanted to give up, and we never thought we'd have to give him up. We thought of him as the Peter Pan of San Francisco. People would just follow him because he made their lives a little happier." ▼

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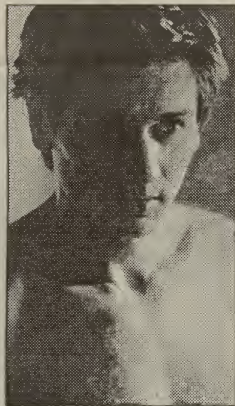
Those nice folks at the San Francisco Symphony assure us that you don't have to be a tuxedo-clad socialite to go to the annual Black & White Ball, which returns this year to the Civic Center on Saturday, June 5 — anything black and white will do. The live music gala will encompass eight city blocks, and the headliners include Joan Baez, Jefferson Starship, members of the Grateful Dead, Paula West, George Clinton & the P-Funk All-Stars, and (pictured) the Brazilian band Vivendo de Pão.

Tickets are \$165; attendees between 21 and 30 pay \$125; through the SFS Box Office, 864-6000, or at (510) 762-BASS. ▼

Outing damned spots

'Dry Cleaning' from France

by Robert Julian



Stanislas Merhar

A dry cleaning operation in a small French city seems, at first, an unlikely setting for a story of tortured desire and sexual obsession. Nicole (Miou-Miou) and Jean-Marie (Charles Berling) are a married couple who live above the cleaners with their adolescent son and Jean-Marie's mother, from whom he inherited the business. When Loic (Stanislas Merhar), a drag performer, comes in to have a stain removed from his gold lamé dress, the husband exclaims upon Loic's departure, "Don't tell me a drag artist is like you or me!" The strength of Jean-Marie's objection belies a visceral connection between the men that will be their undoing.

Anne Fontaine writes and directs *Dry Cleaning* with a sure hand, extracting finely detailed performances from her three lead actors. Miou-Miou's face betrays her desperation with life as a working wife in a dull marriage, in a dull town. Yet beneath her disenchantment, there is still a spark of hope. Loic inspires Nicole to recall that change is always possible. Stanislas Merhar infuses the role of Loic with an undeniable masculinity and, at the same time, tremendous sexual ambiguity. Nicole's desperation for change, and her sexual frustrations, are easily addressed by Loic's attentions, but Jean-Marie, the husband, is a tougher case to crack.

Charles Berling's Jean-Marie is a man who never removed himself from his mother's watchful eye. He is used to disapproval and discipline, not the wild prospect of sexual abandon which Loic forces him to entertain. Jean-Marie's sexual attraction to Loic is so acute, it is almost painful to watch, and Berling portrays the husband's dilemma with great depth and restraint.

The wonderful accomplishment of *Dry Cleaning* is its ability to recreate on film the world of a small-town French entrepreneur. It is a claustrophobic, petty universe which rivals the exquisite hell of Jean-Paul Sartre's *No Exit*. Although the menage a trois which evolves during the course of *Dry Cleaning* lacks the glamour of *Cabaret* or *Something for Everyone*, the film rewards through its revelation of character and its strong sense of place. Fans of French cinema will find much to admire in this interesting collision of personalities. And Stanislas Merhar's performance as the ambisexual Loic should resonate long after the film has concluded. Rarely has an actor, in any language, been able to combine pathos and sexual pathology in such an exceptional fashion. ▼

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FILM

Lysergic landscapes

John Maybury's 'Read Only Memory'

by Gary Morris

John Maybury, who's been making experimental films since 1982, emigrated to the ostensibly commercial world of feature films with 1998's *Love Is the Devil*, the well-regarded story of the tortured affair between painter Francis Bacon and his dizzy, muscular muse George Dyer. But that film was hardly a typical biopic. The Bacon estate's refusal to cooperate with him was only one more reason for Maybury to dig into his roomy bag of experimental tricks. The result was a series of often brilliant effects, most notably his catty payback to Bacon's heirs by staging numerous scenes in the exact manner of Bacon's bloody, angst-ridden paintings.

However, any fears that the film was Maybury's attempt to "go Hollywood" — or even "go Channel 4" — can be put to rest with his more recent works: *Maledicta Electronica*, coming up in the Lesbian & Gay Film Festival; and most strikingly, the sometimes rewarding, sometimes grueling *Read Only Memory*, a 3+ hour video installation making its U.S. premiere at the Yerba Buena Center.

Fans of *Love Is the Devil* will recall that film's hammering use of strobe effects, sudden bloody faces, curious camera angles, and a kind of mythology of the unconscious that always threatened to overwhelm the tenuous reality of Bacon and Dyer's lives. In *Read Only Memory*, it's no longer a threat; story, characters, and other reassuring elements are simply obliterated by what appears to be Maybury's quite elaborate private mythology, rendered as a visual tour-de-force.

Maybury is always generous in his homages (*Maledicta Electronica*, for example, is a tribute to British wartime code-breaker Alan Turing), and *Read Only Memory* is no exception. The opening sequence resurrects the famous psychedelic split-screen light show from 2001, and for good reason. As in the Kubrick film, this is the trippy intro to a fabulously weird, drug-addled psychic landscape. Maybury's mindbending tour hits all manner of cultural hot buttons: gender politics, anticonsumerism, cultural imperialism, AIDS, bizarre computer art, trance music and imagery — if you can think of it, you can probably find it somewhere in here.

Other objects of Maybury's artistic affections include Edward Muybridge, whose famous series of frames of horses is recalled here; *The Road Warrior*, whose homo-inflected character the Humungous is vocally reprised; J. K. Huysman's *Against Nature*, a cornerstone novel of fin-de-siècle decadence whose spirit drives much of the film; and of course Andy Warhol, from whom Maybury borrows the endless repetitions of faces.

The Fat Controller

Every trip needs a guide, and this one has a spirit-muse in the form of a fat, naked woman — or was that a post-op tranny? — who reappears throughout, gyrating across lysergic landscapes to Arabic trance music. Lest it be said that Maybury has no sense of

humor, this character is the height of camp. She wears an assortment of ornate headdresses and glittering go-go boots, and her dance is far from classical; it's closer perhaps to the funky chicken. The film's attempt to re-create an acid trip is showcased in this creature's dance: whenever she moves, a rainbow of colors and shapes appear, as if her appendages are the artist's brushes. Those who can't get enough of this hefty, unpredictable gal will be pleased to see her multiplied in one sequence, creating all kinds of visual mayhem with her bumps and grinds.

Still, Maybury is far from mere frivolous campmeister, and much of *Read Only Memory* is pithy cultural criticism. An early extended sequence shows a cartoonish landscape crowded with a parade of consumer objects moving through the air as if on invisible conveyor belts; a typical such object is a bottle of perfume labeled "Paranoia." The director's color-

fully weird visualizations of these images make them work.

Much of *Read Only Memory*'s imagery is downbeat and disturbing, particularly another recurring character seen in strobe-drenched half-light, writhing on a floor wrapped in ragged bandages. In another scene, a splash of blood appears on a face, seen in distorted close-up; soon the face is covered in blood, a clear reference to AIDS paranoia. Maybury's punishing use of strobe-edits, distorted angles, and kaleidoscopic colors in such sequences is both shocking and obscuring, putting a bit of breathing room between the viewer and the startling imagery. Some viewers will appreciate this distance; others will ignore it and simply immerse themselves in the images. Still others may prefer to sample this challenging work in bits, which the egalitarian Maybury probably would not find at all objectionable. ▼



A scene from John Maybury's *Read Only Memory*.

Read Only Memory shows in two parts, June 5 through August 15, and is free with gallery admission, \$5. The

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Mythbusters

'Golden Threads' on POV

by Victoria A. Brownworth

Aging. Once one turns 30, the fear of getting old grows more insistent with each birthday. Blame the youth culture, blame Hollywood and TV for focusing on the 14-to-25-year-old market. Blame Britney Spears and the Backstreet Boys. Blame feminism for not shattering sexism.

Blame men for perpetuating it. Blame queers for buying into the whole straight package that suggests people over 40 really should just stay in deep hiding. There's certainly blame enough to go around. The fact is, we only really learn what to do with youth once we're a tad too old to enjoy it; hence the tired — and old — axiom, youth is wasted on the young.

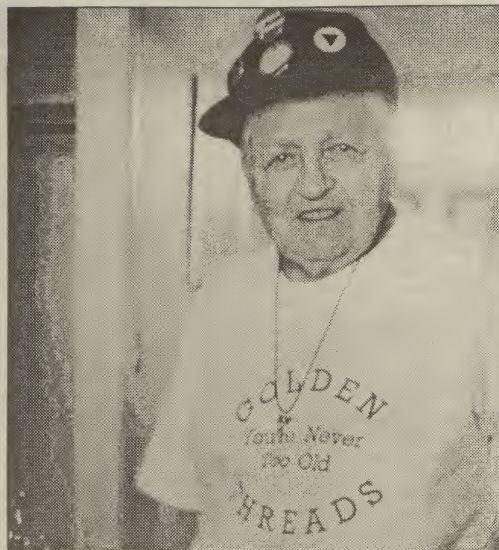
Christine Burton says she "didn't really start to live" until she turned 80. That's when her sexiness and *joie de vivre* really blossomed. It was then that Burton really began to feel free and wanted to pass that feeling on to other lesbians. She started Golden Threads, an international correspondence group for older lesbians which meets annually in Provincetown.

Golden Threads, directed by Lucy Winer, airs on PBS's POV series June 8. Part documentary, part personal narrative, part biographical vignette, part stop-action animation, *Golden Threads* raises many questions about the role of aging in lesbian lives, using the 90-year-old Burton and her work as nexus for the narrative.

Those looking for polished, fluid filmmaking may dislike Winer's low-budget and amateurish style, but Burton is marvelous and Winer's subject matter compelling enough to ease the disgruntled formalist through what evolves into a very worthwhile, engaging and historic hour.

Winer introduces the viewer to Burton at the ninth anniversary of *Golden Threads*, where she is clearly the commander-in-chief of hundreds of dykes. Dressed in lavender and purple, sporting a host of protest buttons and talking the kind of in-your-face dyke talk one associates with twentysomethings, Burton has a laconic charm that pulls the viewer in. What surprises most is how youthful she seems; this is not the old lady your grandmother was.

The *Golden Threads* women are strikingly ordinary — they could be anybody's mother or grandmother at the beach. It is only when they begin to talk that they are revealed as lesbians. Some are coupled, others are hoping to meet a nice single gal at the event; some look in their 40s, others much older, though nearly everyone has gray hair. Ruth Ellis,



Christine Burton in Lucy Winer's *Golden Threads*

a trim, black butch who plays pool like the sharks in Gwendolyn Brooks' poem, is closing in on 97. One woman in her late 50s talks about meeting her new love through *Golden Threads*. She wasn't interested at first — 70 seemed too old to her, but she was intrigued by two things. The new woman had been in her previous relationship for 41 years (the lover had died) and indicated she still had a strong libido.

This kind of myth-busting is at the heart of *Golden Threads*. Women don't just shrivel up and blow away after menopause; they are still intensely vital, as these women show. And they have a tremendous amount of history to share, but don't — as one woman notes — want to be viewed simply as historic monuments no longer alive. Burton tells of receiving a letter from one woman who had considered suicide before finding *Golden Threads* — she was that isolated. Burton states declaratively, "It's terrible what society does to women who are aging" — and how that makes every woman fear old age.

grantly lesbian as she was at her all-girl retreat in Gaytown USA, she knocks some of the nursing home staff for a loop. In one scene, the speech therapist shows Burton pictures; she is expected to describe what she sees. At a picture of a man changing a car tire while a woman watches, Burton tries to explain that the woman should be changing the tire; the speech therapist is not amused.

Winer inserts animated bits about herself and her perspective on aging — and on having fun — (she doesn't like either) into the text. These don't really work. The choppy editing also gets tiresome after a while. What is maddening — to filmmaker and viewer alike — is that Burton's stroke puts an end to discourse. Winer tells us in voiceover all the things she had hoped to ask Burton after the *Golden Threads* retreat — history she'll never record because the stroke stole too much of Burton away. Which points to the importance of recording our oral histories now, while there's still time. (Is Winer contacting Ruth Ellis for a documentary on her? What she must have seen in her 97 years!)

Golden Threads is a consciousness-raiser for anyone planning to live past 40. The film also makes one think about how out we will be able to be in retirement villages and nursing homes. Uneven though it may be, *Golden Threads* is a must-see. ▼

Mrs. Goodwrench

Sadly, Burton had a massive stroke less than 24 hours after leaving the weekend retreat. The final segment of *Golden Threads* takes us to the nursing home where she struggles to regain speech and some mobility. Just as out and fla-

and then she said, "How much more crap can you fit into this place?" And I said, "Bitch" and walked away.



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THEATRE

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It's a good weekend for street theater, as the 5th Annual San Francisco Street Theater Festival, *In The Street*, hits several locations around town. Daytime performances (Sat. & Sun., June 5-6, 12-5 p.m.) are in Cohen Alley, in the 500 block of Ellis St. between Leavenworth and Hyde. This year's "roving evening performance", on Friday, June 5, 8-10:30 p.m., will be at Duboce Park on Steiner Street. Performers include Sister Spit, Steamroller, and Nao Bustamante. The festival, sponsored by the Tenderloin's 509 Cultural Center/ Luggage Store and Wise Pool Community Arts, is free of admission. Info at 255-5971. ▼

Round and round again

OnSite Dance Co.'s 'Freewheel' at YBC

by Aimée Ts'ao

I loved OnSite Dance Company's *Freewheel* while it was still germinating back in December, and though I enjoyed the finished product at the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts Forum last weekend, I wish I could say that I liked the end result better than the work-in-progress. The truth is that it didn't move me nearly as much the second time around. Maybe it's just like relationships with people: when you first meet, the excitement of discovery, the intoxication of possibility clouds your view of the potential underlying conflicts. But you work through those issues, and while the resulting "marriage" is based on love, trust, and caring, the glamour is gone.

Freewheel came out of a Wattis Artist-in-Residence grant that allowed OnSite directors Jessica Lutes and Paul Benney to develop new work during a three-week period last fall. The Center for the Arts Gallery had an exhibition on bicycle culture on display at the time, and it inspired the two choreographers to explore a world new to them. The week before the preview, I had seen the National Acrobats of China, who astounded with an entire section of bicycle riding, including balancing a dozen performers on a single two-wheeler. Since there was no way OnSite could begin to reach that level of technical expertise, I focused on what the work was showing about the community of bike messengers, and cycling in general.

Many elements of OnSite's work contribute to the creation of a very successful piece of theater. The cast includes dancers, kids, real bike messengers, a musician. The bicyclists ride around the perimeter of the Forum, surrounding the audience with their nearly silent speed and graceful motion, immediately including everyone in the space. Window shades at the back of the space rise to reveal half a dozen cyclists weaving in and out on the terraced gardens outside. The soft glow of the streetlamps and the bikes' headlights, seen through the mesh screens still over the windows, evoke a dream quality, and completely blur the border between the performance and the outside world. The bike messengers rap on the window and are admitted by a security guard who even signs for their packages. As the piece continues, we see innocent bystanders walk by and watch through the windows, and realize that they, too, are an integral part of the performance.

Slo-mo crash

While OnSite's tone is largely playful, horsing around with lots of running, jumping and riding, one significant addition since the preview brings into focus the dangers inherent in riding in a dense urban environment. In the middle of the performance, there is a slow-motion collision. A bicycle goes up in the air, and its rider is made to rotate by many hands in the background. She lands on her feet but is visibly shaken, though glad to be safe. Later, the dancers ride their bikes into the end of a very thick blue gym mat, somersault over their handlebars, and land on their

backs. Everyone seems to be having a fabulous time, but one man doesn't get up from his flip. He is folded into the mat and taken away. What could echo more deeply the recent concern for the number of bikers killed or injured on San Francisco streets? The silence and the reverent, yet uncomprehending looks by which the performers acknowledge the scene of the accident are chilling.

Richard Board provided lighting that was appropriately dramatic, yet subtle at times. On the other hand, Gary Lutes' sound design sometimes was a bit overdone. Maybe just the volume needs adjusting, but one scene I had found so touching in the preview, Jessica Lutes riding with Benney on the handlebars, seemed to lose its tenderness when an electronic ambient buzz was added.

Another significant change is in the cast. Now missing is a bike

messenger named Junior, who had impressed me so much the first time around that I spoke with him after the show. He was a middle-aged man with a long beard and hair to match, who had been a bike messenger for two decades. He appeared the antithesis of the stereotypical bike messenger: young, lean, athletic, energetic. He was like the eye of a hurricane, calm in the midst of the whirlwind of traffic around him. He provided a necessary foil, and a ballast.

A few months ago, when I ran out of my office to feed my parking meter, I found him on the sidewalk and asked him if he would be in the upcoming performance of *Freewheel*. He said that it had been interesting, but he didn't know if he would do it again. He floated off down Battery Street, and I thought he was definitely a person who seemed devoid of the craving for that Warholian fifteen minutes of



Doe Yamashiro, Kevin Clarke, Peter Rothblat of OnSite Dance Co.

fame. Even if he would not recreate his role, the part should have been assumed by one of the dancers, as it provided an important balance point, a demonstra-

tion of Zen and the Art of Bike Messengering. Even when life doesn't cooperate, the beauty of the theater is that you can create the illusion that it does. ▼

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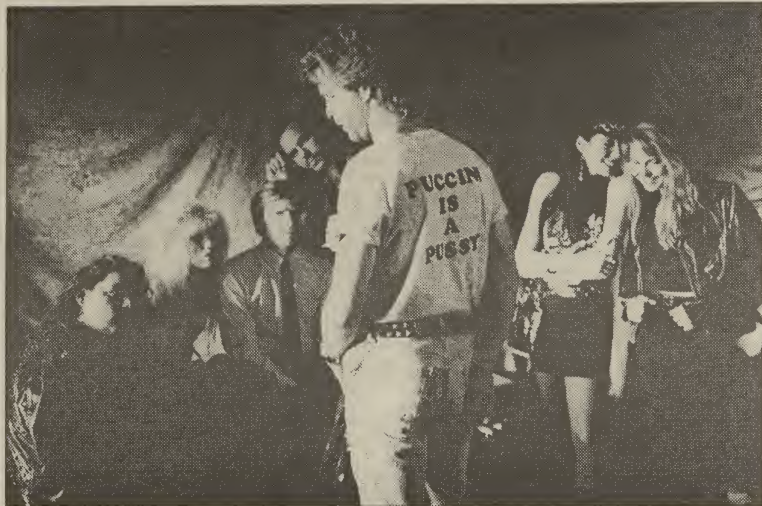
◀ Arts cover

ets at all? *Ring* cycles are such mega-events in the opera world these days — think of it as *Star Wars* with better music — that tickets are hard to come by in the best of circumstances. I am told, however, that SFO's cycle three — June 20-29, featuring a relatively young and unknown cast, which in this case may be a good thing — still has a couple of hundred unsold seats. (Contact the SFO box office at (415) 864-3330.)

What if you can't afford live opera and still want your Wagner fix? After all, once the thing gets rolling, if you don't know who Wotan, Erda and Jane Eaglen are, you might feel as left out around the water cooler as the guy who isn't conversant with Jar Jar Binks' Jamaican accent or Queen Amidala's Kabuki frocks. So here is a pop culture guide to getting a *Ring* fix without actually having to enter the goldily-gleaming War Memorial and sit through 15-16 hours of German music.

Video — Hey, if you are not at *Rheingold* on June 9, be sure to tune in to KQED at 8 p.m. for *Sing Faster*, winner of the Sundance Filmmakers' Trophy. This hour-long documentary by Jon Else should be required viewing for all disgruntled operagoers, especially critics. It demonstrates how the complicated art of opera is supported by the blood, sweat and straining quadriceps of those hard-working, backstage union crews. Filmed during dress rehearsals, amidst smoke, dust, stygian gloom and the pressure of deadlines — thus the film's ironic title — these unsung heroes muscle the sets into place, scream about the lighting and sound cues, and generally behave like lifeguards or firemen. The show would not go on without them, and the fact that nobody gets decapitated in all that chaos is a miracle. At one point, the director photographs the rapturous, upturned faces of the stagehands, and we think, "Ah, they are getting culture." Nope. They're watching the NBA playoffs on backstage TV. This film is better than laughing gas.

Another multiple film festival winner is *Valhalla*, a full-length fiction movie, written and directed by Jonathan D. Gift in 1992. Low budget and unassuming, almost a home movie, it tells the tale of three estranged brothers who return home when their Dad, a Wagner buff, has a heart attack and must give up a cherished trip to Bayreuth, the Wagner shrine in Bavaria. They get the



A scene from Jonathan D. Gift's *Valhalla*, screening at Yerba Buena Center for the Arts.

bright idea of putting on *The Ring* in his living room, not quite as difficult as it might seem if you lip-synch to a recording, use Hollywood connections for props and special effects, and hire a muscle-bound Malibu surfer to play Siegfried.

You have to know the *Ring* well in order to get the in-jokes and follow this severely truncated version of the four operas, but *Valhalla* is genuinely affecting, and some of the staging is more magical than anything you'll ever see in a mere opera house. Sponsored by the Wagner Society of Northern California, *Valhalla* screens at Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, June 11 and July 2. Order tickets from www.wagnersf.org, or contact the producers for copies of the video at www.hurricaneC.com.

Live Performances — On July 4 at 2 p.m., the San Francisco Opera orchestra, chorus and soloists Frances Ginzler (Brünnhilde), Marjana Lipovsek (Fricka), George Gray (Siegfried) and Tom Fox (Alberich) will present highlights from the *Ring* under the baton of Donald Runnicles at Stern Grove (19th and Sloat), in a concert whose biggest inducement is that it is free. Bring your own potato salad.

But what if you hate Wagner, that old anti-Semite (though you'd have loved his velvet wall hangings and silk underwear)? You can still get in on the fun by hearing *The Merry Nibelungs*, a rude *Ring* burlesque by Oscar Straus, composer of *The Chocolate Soldier* (ah, Nelson Eddy!). Comic tenor Ross Halper offers a

new "R"-rated translation of the 1904 operetta. Fully staged by the Opera Ensemble of San Francisco, *Merry Nibelungs* plays at The 7th Note showclub (915 Columbus at Lombard) on June 14, 17, 20, 21 and 27 at 8 p.m. Call (415) 431-1823 for tickets.

Reading about the Ring — The only real way to understand Wagner is to listen to it live, though recordings will do in a pinch. The next best alternative is reading about it. More books have been written about Wagner than about any other historical figure save Napoleon and Jesus Christ, but many Wagnerian tomes are contentious, overly scholarly or just plain tedious. For the complete Wagnerian virgin, the best intro I've found is *Wagner Without Fear* (Vintage Original, 1998, \$15) by William Berger, who worked at SFO. Full of factoids, opinions and spot-on analysis, Berger's book not only is informative and funny, but remarkably free of prejudice and received opinion.

Wagner as vegetarian, Wagner as lover, Wagner as crank, Wagner as proto-Nazi, Berger covers it all. Read this book twice and you can hold your own with those opera lobby bores who lay down the law without having any evidence except years of swallowing *Gramophone's* chauvinistic critics whole. Berger agrees with me and B.A.R. critic Tim Pfaff that Karajan's recording of the *Ring* (DG Originals), whatever its vocal deficiencies, is orchestrally in a class by itself. Berger says simply: "No one else has ever come close to Kara-

jan and the Berlin Philharmonic." Amen.

Finally, the long out-of-print graphic novel of *The Ring* (DC Comics, 1991, \$24.95) has been reprinted by a Wagner-loving publisher in El Cerrito. It is drawn by master artist Gil Kane and dramatized by Roy Thomas, who told me that he listened to the Solti recording over and over until Wagner's rhythms were printed in his brain. (And that's all Solti is good for; if you want Birgit Nilsson's Brünnhilde, get Karl Böhm's live recording from Bayreuth on Philips.) This explains why, if you know the score, you can hear the music as you read Thomas' dialogue.

As for Kane's anti-gravity comic book art, wouldn't you kill to see a *Ring* look like this on stage, with pneumatic sex kittens and pumped-up heroes every bit as pop-erotic and brainless as Wagner's own characters? Be warned, however, Kane's villains are part of that persistent Aryan fantasy — just redemonstrated in the new *Star Wars* movie — in which, as critic Anthony Lane bitterly reminds us, "The threat of the malformed and rapacious is regularly defused by a body of tall white knights."

No, it is not pretty or multi-culti, but it is genuine Wagner. I suspect the composer would have loved DC Comics. *The Ring* graphic novel is available at the Opera House gift shop, or by mail from ExPress (1-800-307-0789). So you didn't score *Ring* tickets? Be cool; you're gonna have a good time anyway. ▼

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Seth speaks

by Tim Pfaff

An Equal Music by Vikram Seth; Broadway Books, \$25

Novelists take music as their subject at their peril. The problems are simple and largely unsolvable. Music itself operates outside the sphere of influence of any words used to describe or analyze it. And it is, by its very nature, evanescent; like a good waiter, it disappears as soon as it has done its work. Strictly speaking, it lasts only as long as its sound takes to decay.

So most novels about music are either philosophical — What's It All About, Alfie? — or psychological, focusing on the behavior and character of musicians and composers. A classic of the first type is E.M. Forster's *Howards End*, a splendid novel except when it addresses musical classics and what they "mean," at which point it descends to the purple prose of early-LP liner notes. A latter-day example of the second type is David Leavitt's *The Page Turner* — which, in the first place, isn't (it's a turgid, disagreeable read) and, in the second, seldom moves beyond an examination of the annihilating narcissism of the star musician.

Vikram Seth's new novel, *An Equal Music*, comes as a welcome antidote to both of those literary tendencies — and strikes me as the first novel about music that gets it right and also succeeds on its own terms, as viable, compelling piece of fiction. When I finished it, I had the same regret I had at the end of Seth's last novel, the monumental *A Suitable Boy* — namely, that I'd never be able to read it for the first time again. Seth's that rarest of contemporary novelists, an adept, sensitive storyteller whose primary aim is to envelop his readers in a story, make them care about its charac-

ters, startle them with twists of plot and leave them, in the home stretch, unable to stop reading while simultaneously wishing the story could go on forever. He is, for my money, the best 19th-century novelist writing in the 20th.

The central characters of *An Equal Music* are string players, members of the cunningly named Maggiore Quartet (the name means "major," as in musical key, but also has promotional implications so savvy that it's amazing there isn't an ensemble so named). The subsidiary cast includes some vividly depicted music paraprofessionals, critics, agents, managers and concert promoters.

All will be immediately recognizable, and believable, to anyone familiar with the art, and the biz. There's a particularly delicious moment early on, at the bitchy, annual pre-Christmas party of the morally compromised music critic Nicholas Spare. While making salacious passes at the Maggiore's gay first violinist, Piers, and its straight second, Michael Holme, the novel's narrator-protagonist Spare muses acidly on the matter of the quartet's rise to fame. "There are two mafias in music," the Maggiore's agent, Erica Cowan, responds witheringly, "the Jewish mafia and the gay mafia, and Piers and I between us have both bases covered."

Your home is a concert hall

The music they play is real, too, and Seth renders both music and playing in a way that drove me back to the pieces mentioned. As I suspect other music lovers may do in the course of reading the book (I encourage it), I found myself recreating some of the Maggiore's programs at home, listening to my favorite recordings of the music they play in the novel.

A master programmer himself,

Seth ends his novel on a solo-piano performance of Bach's *The Art of Fugue*. The composer's towering (and unfinished) summa, the work figures heavily throughout the novel: as the source of an encore at a Maggiore concert at London's Wigmore Hall, as the vexatious repertoire (it's unclear what instruments the work was composed for, but certainly not the modern string quartet) for the Maggiore's first CD for Stratus Records (whose A&R Director, Ysobel Shingle, is a minor character of Dickensian vividness) and finally, as the repertoire for the Wigmore recital of Julia McNicholl, a pianist who joins the Maggiore for a performance of Schubert's "Trout" Quintet in Vienna, and, more central to the book, Michael's long-lost and temporarily regained love.

I can't help wondering if the character of Julia was not inspired, at least in part, by my own favorite real-life pianist, Britain's Joanna MacGregor. In any case, *An Equal Music* impelled me back to MacGregor's haunting recording of *The Art of Fugue* (which appeared while Seth, an avid follower of the scene, was writing his novel), which I now can't stop listening to.

In his recent appearance at the Herbst Theatre, Seth allowed that his research for the novel included interviewing numerous prominent musicians and attending, at



Vikram Seth

their invitation, rehearsals of major string quartets. It shows. The musicians of *An Equal Music* act and talk like musicians, and the book's rehearsals and concerts feel like rehearsals and concerts. This is a major achievement.

Even better, Seth seizes upon situations a musician or educated music-lover would understand — the search for a rare recording, the anxieties of instrument ownership, the agonies of instrument auctions — and uses them for pivotal plot points. In these moments the writing builds levels of tension I found nearly unendurable.

But best of all — and the most deeply musical aspect of the novel — are the rhythm, song and line of the prose itself. There's a kind of lapidary perfection about the writing that goes far beyond fussiness or mannerism to achieve a

poise, balance and clarity of expression one finds in the boldest yet most carefully wrought operas. This feels to me like Seth's *Lulu*, or in current terms, his *Powder Her Face*. It unfolds with an inexorable rhythm across a sustained narrative line without a single false note or misstep, narrative or tonal. I'd no more change a word of it than a note of any of the classical quartets it celebrates.

And after all that, *An Equal Music* has the courage to be a good read. This is, more than a saga about musical life at the end of the century, a love story, and a wrenching one at that, hotly narrated yet coolly observed. The characters are deftly drawn and utterly believable in their strengths and foibles, and like their counterparts in great operas, they speak Seth's music in accents all their own.

The daffy old book world is clucking about Seth's "misfortune" at having a novel about music published virtually simultaneously with Salman Rushdie's *The Ground Beneath Her Feet*, a retelling of the Orpheus myth in rock-music terms. That the day's two best Indian-born writers, major cosmopolitans both and masters of their craft, should have written books about music at roughly the same time seems instead a cause for wonder — and rejoicing. ▼

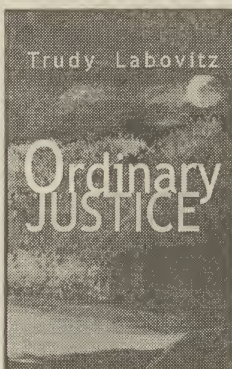
Battery, but no suspense

by Deborah Peifer

Ordinary Justice by Trudy Labovitz; Spinners, \$12.00

I've been trying to figure out why this first novel by Trudy Labovitz is so unsatisfying. The writing is pretty good, the characters fairly detailed, the plot involves issues like battered women, about which I care deeply — but the whole was significantly less than the sum of its parts. I think the problem is that there is really nothing at stake in this novel. Although there are frequent references to dangerous situations and threatening strangers, there is nevertheless no point at which I believed anyone really was in jeopardy — a fatal flaw in a novel that purports to be a mystery.

Zoe Kergulin left her Washington, DC job because she was unable to protect her best friend from her murderous husband. She hopes to find peace in the serenity of the West Virginia mountains, farming, restoring this old house she purchased (which is referred to as both



Queen Anne and a late Victorian, an architectural anomaly that suggests lots of work is necessary) and doing an occasional bit of investigating for corporate clients. She won't ever let herself get involved in personal traumas again, no sirree. Who should walk into Zoe's architectural mishmash but the mysterious Susan, who refuses to give her last name and is

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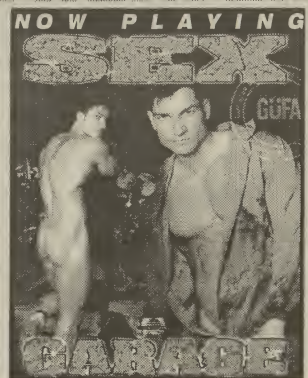
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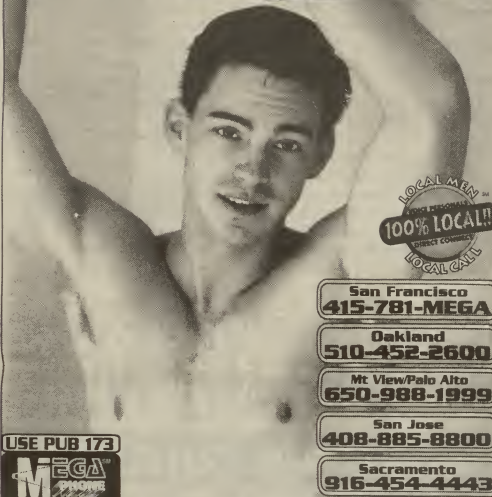
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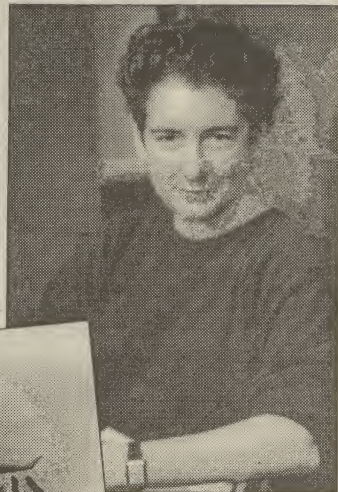
The World and Other Places by
Jeanette Winterson; Knopf, \$22

Kafka once wrote, "A book must be the axe for the frozen sea inside us." The fictions that live up to this challenge, the books that move us, invariably do so by unlocking what is deeply familiar to us in a way that seems new, lyrical and unforgettable. In her previous books, such as *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*, *Written on the Body*, and *Sexing the Cherry*, Jeanette Winterson demonstrated an immense gift for creating such "axes." Her prose is poetic, her storylines are magical, and her continuing explorations of gender, identity and eroticism are lively and fascinating.

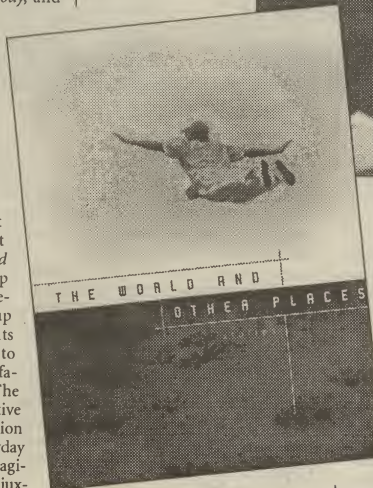
Winterson's latest book, a collection of short stories entitled *The World and Other Places*, lives up to the promise of her previous books, and lives up to its title by taking its readers on excursions into territories that are both familiar and fantastic. The most curious and attractive quality of Winterson's fiction is her ability to turn everyday events into something magical and otherworldly; her juxtaposition of actions and images is such that we know we are in a world alive with possibility. She begins her story "Lives of Saints," for example, with the following sentence: "That day we saw three Jews in full length black coats and black hats standing on identical stools, looking into the funnel of a pasta machine." One wants to savor the turn of every corner within Winterson's stories because there seem to be surprises around each one.

The stories in this collection, Winterson's first, represent her

entire career, so those who have enjoyed her novels will appreciate this opportunity to see her in various lights. This is not to say that the pieces collected here are all that divergent, or that they vary in quality; Winterson is admirably consistent in her craft, and clearly in control of creating her uniquely fanciful world.



Jeanette Winterson



ample, is a very short fable about three friends who travel the world in search of "that which cannot be found." It's one of Winterson's more mysterious pieces, but the imagery is so beautiful, and Winterson is so captivating as a storyteller, that one simply has to stick with her. Even Winterson's more accessible stories exhibit a kind

of *Twilight Zone* twist. In "O'Brien's First Christmas," a young woman is visited by a Christmas fairy, is granted a wish, and finds true love. Winterson avoids all the possible corniness of such an arrangement and turns it into an engaging, even sweet holiday tale.

Reading Winterson's fiction, one is reminded of the "magic realism" of Julio Cortázar, Gabriel García Márquez and others. Anything can happen, and it usually happens in a very beautiful and enchanting way. But Winterson can take us there from even the most common venues. The story that titles the collection, "The World and Other Places," concerns the plight of a young airman who is suddenly afflicted with a kind of existential crisis. In one passage he sits in a dismal hotel room and thinks: "In the darkness and the silence I can hear, far below, the matter of life continuing without me. The night-shift. What are they doing, these people who come and go, cleaning, bringing food, wanting money, wanting to fight? What will they eat? Where will they sleep? Do they love someone? How many of them will see morning? Will I?" In the districts of Winterson's fiction these questions are posed regularly, and poignantly. And they are explored with a beauty and a mystery that make for fascinating

Dog love

One of Winterson's favorite themes is that of love, intimacy and the geography of connection. In the first story in the collection, "The 24-Hour Dog," she explores the mysterious intimacy between human beings and animals. It's a lyrical, almost sensual portrait of a rural woman's relationship with her new dog, a relationship that in many ways stupefies and challenges her. In a refrain that Winterson uses throughout the story, the narrator tells herself, "He's only a dog. Yes, but he will find me out."

Winterson explores intimacy of a more human kind in a variety of other stories in the collection. In "Atlantic Crossing," she tells the tale of a lonely businessman on an ocean liner who falls in love with a woman named Gabriel. In "Lives of Saints," Winterson presents a charming story of two women who meet by chance, share a kind of eccentric love affair and coexistence, and then drift apart again. Winterson has the talent for rendering these disparate voices richly and believably.

There are several "flights of fancy" in *The World and Other Places*. In "Orion," for example, Winterson retells the lives of Orion and Artemis and others in a beautifully poetic narrative. "The Three Friends," another ex-

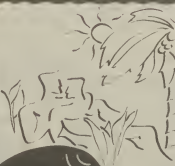
Ordinary Justice

◀ page 39

clearly in trouble. Zoe blows her off, so when Susan turns up missing and her abusive husband turns up dead, Zoe's guilt requires her to search for the missing Susan, and to solve, in one unbelievable swoop, the mysteries of the dead husband, the abused wife, the missing dogs, Dorsey's real name, and the Underground Railroad. Huh?

New writers frequently layer on subplots when they should be

deepening the main plot and characters, an error that Labovitz is guilty of in spades. She lades on so many subplots that every one of them, as well as the main plot, is given seriously short shrift. At no point do we care what happens to the people in *Ordinary Justice* because they never ring truly alive — we have lots of facts about them, but their emotional centers remain empty. Suspense is altogether absent. The key word in this book's title is ordinary — Labovitz provides a by-the-numbers novel that is so drab it's lifeless. ▼



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BOOKS

Thriller with smarts

by Deborah Peifer

Waiting by Frank M. Robinson;
Forge, \$23.95

Of all the literary genres, the one that gets considerably less respect than it deserves is the airport book (or as it was called in earlier, gentler days, the train station book). You know what I'm talking about — that thriller or mystery that makes the seemingly interminable wait in the terminus fly by. Good airport books are not easy to write, especially one that fills the time without threatening brain damage. *Waiting* by Frank M. Robinson is such a book, and it does consid-

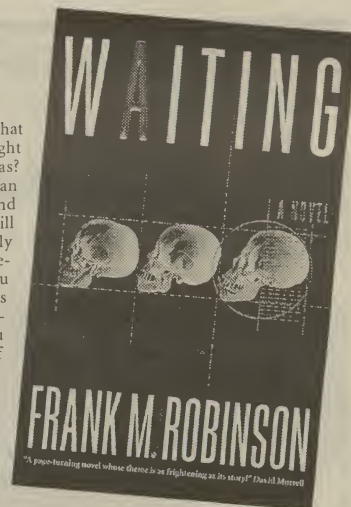
erably more than merely pass the time. *Waiting* is a thriller with smarts, and it is a pleasure to recommend.

Robinson sets the suspense with a powerful opening chapter in which a man is terrorized because he thinks he is being followed, even though he never sees anyone following him. "It never occurs to him that he was being herded." When it occurs to you, I guarantee that all the hair on your body will stand up in fright. The doctor is slaughtered by dogs, and his friends meet to discuss the horrifying events. Our reluctant hero, Artie, decides to investigate the death, and learns the meaning of dread as more and more people who had any

contact with the dead doctor are being killed in bizarre and seemingly unrelated incidents. When Artie's wife and son go missing, his fear becomes panic. His willingness to risk all to save them from this nameless, faceless threat provides powerful motivation.

Characters are richly detailed, and the plot twists are fascinating as well as credible in this very fine novel. Robinson creates terror in everyday settings — there is no safe harbor. *Waiting* is a novel of suspense that makes you think about the large questions of illusion and reality. What happens to your sense of self and its place in the world when you learn that someone you've known all your

life is nothing like what you knew (or thought you knew) she was? What does it mean when your best friend is clearly willing to kill you and your family for personal advancement? How do you fight a threat that is both real and invisible? How do you protect yourself from everything? Read *Waiting* with all the lights on and all the doors and windows locked, not that mere locks and lights will save you. ▼



When in Rome...

by Marv. Shaw

Rubicon by Steven Saylor; St.
Martin's Press, \$23.95

Crossing the Rubicon has come to be a figurative way to name making a climactic, irrevocable decision and/or action. Its origin could easily have been Julius Caesar's bringing his Gallic legions into Italy, crossing the Rubicon River and threatening Rome under the ruler Pompey in 49 B.C. Civil war engulfed the empire, and it is within this chaotic time period that Saylor sets his latest mystery.

Gordianus the Finder is forced to be the detective because it is in his household's courtyard that the body of Numerius, the beloved lieutenant of Pompey, is found. Pompey charges Gordianus, sixtyish and semi-retired, with the task of discovering the murderer. Gordianus' appellation is soon explained when his skill in finding concealed, incriminating documents is displayed.

The various "Rubicons" Gordianus must cross erupt partly out of the circumstances in which he must guard his own

and his family's life, and partly out of the actions he must take for his own honor.

Saylor, a classically educated historian, has immersed himself in the life of ancient Rome and brings it vividly to life. He creates both historical and fictional people in this complex tale of loyalties, betrayals, intrigue, and violence in a frightened city, the south Italian countryside, and the strategic port city of Brundisium (present-day Brindisi) at the heel of Italy. The atmospheres and locations, from the impressive Forum to the salacious Tavern, are evoked strongly. Six previous mysteries in this *Roma sub Rosa* series have prepared the author well.

The other characters are limned very realistically. Cicero keeps his literary dignity, while at the same time showing how he must weave and dodge as an intended statesman who tries to be a senator. Cicero's secretary, Tiro, is part of the time the Alexandrian philosopher Soscarades, master of intrigue.

Behind all the macho bluster, Meto, reputed to be the loving tentmate of Caesar's, struggles to stay loyal to his father Gordianus and to keep his station as an intimate of Caesar's.

The story mounts to a fiery climax in and near the harbor of Brundisium as the forces of Pompey and Caesar clash. The revelation of Numerius' murderer makes the reader aware of how much Gordianus will do to protect those he loves.

The novel, and all that it tells us of people in the maelstrom of political and military civil strife, seem universal when compared to similar situations and people today. *Rubicon* has the distinction of being living history and a mirror of our own day. ▼

Steven Saylor, author of *Rubicon*

Rick Solomon

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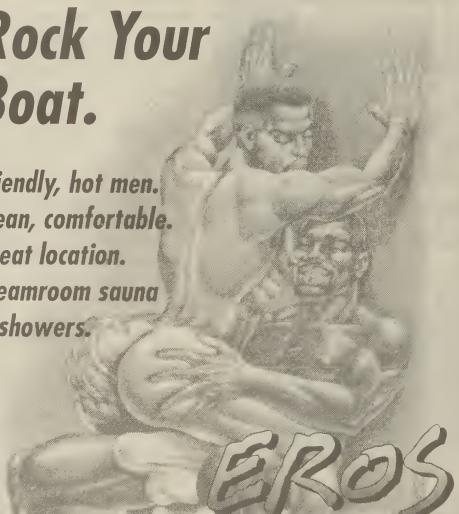
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Out There

◀ page 30

No doze

Is Madrid an entire city of insomniacs? After a full night of strolling, tapas and (if you're lucky) dinner, the bars don't get going until midnight, pick up by 2 or 3, and go on all night. Nobody seems to be up in the morning, when there's a cool breeze in from the mountains. By midday the sun is blazing, and it's time for a *siesta*.

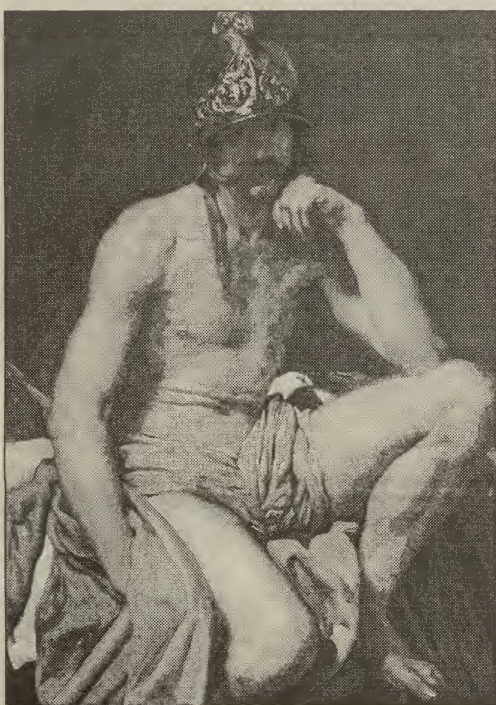
We know it's not going to endear us to the animal rights activists, but the highlight of our visit to Madrid was not our time in the incredible trio of art museums — the Prado, the *Reina Sofía*, and the Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza, stuffed in the rafters with Velázquez, Goya, Picasso,



The poster at Las Ventas bullring

Miró — but our visit to the bullring. We were in Madrid for the San Isidro festival, which in-

cludes a sort of World Series of bullfights, every night for a week. The *corrida* is pure, visceral, life-and-death spectacle, the ultimate in brains vs. brawn. Yes, it's exploitative of the bull, but at least he is given a proper funeral at the end, and not incidentally given the royal treatment while he is alive. They don't tell you about the *picadores'* horses, on the other hand, who have no choice but to get charged and stabbed by the fired-up *toro* and stand there to take it like a horse. Even though they're heavily padded, they are gored, and they're blindfolded the whole time, too. So there's a basic S/M aspect to the whole affair which can be quite lovely.



El dios Marte, by Diego Velázquez de Silva at the Prado



Manuel Jesús "El Cid" Sala

The excitable crowd at our bullfight waved white handkerchiefs, a big honor, for the matador Manuel Jesús "El Cid" Sala, and threw flowers at his feet. We would have thrown down our hotel keys if we thought there were a chance he'd take them. He knelt down in front of the bull, flirted with him, swiveled his sexy hips. Need we even mention his skintight outfit? A matador's "suit of lights" is about as many sequins and sparkles a man can have on him and still look like a man.

We stayed at a small hotel in Chueca, the "gay zone," which for most of its life had been a brothel where famous matadors hung up their capes. Mussolini's son-in-law rented the whole place for three days in '41 — talk about tea with Il Duce. We went to the Madrid Eagle and thought, if only perpetual leather scribe Mr. Marcus could see us now! The dress code at the bar was leather, rubber or Levi's; the dress code in the backroom was minimum. A bear waddled up to the bar and asked (in English), "Where's the men's room?" The bartender did a passable imitation of the Ugly American.

Never the accidental tourist, we researched our trip before we went to the municipal pools in the Casa del Campo park. Our guidebook said we would recognize the gay section, and as we came upon the row of sun-worshipping men in tiny European swimsuits and big muscles, we knew we had found it. There was almost no one actually in the pool, though lap-swimmers were stroking away indoors, and there did seem to be a lot of men watching. The water was refreshingly cold under the hot Madrid sun, and we could wash off the chlorine at outdoor showers or inside the *vestiduras masculinas*.

In travel as in sex, context is everything, and we'd like our context to be España another day. Even though we are not the type of boy who pees in the shower, we did enjoy pissing in the bidet. ▼

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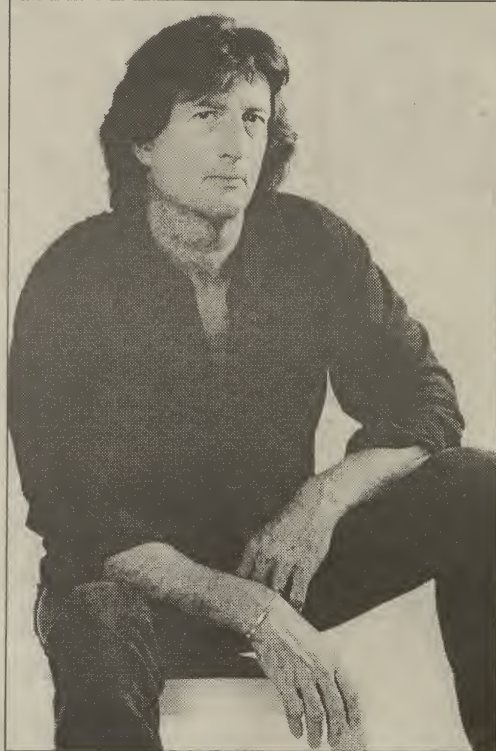
Chris Smither to play Noe Valley Ministry

by Tony Montague

One record can change your whole life. In the early '60s, Chris Smither was just another teenage guitarist hanging out in the coffeehouses of New Orleans' folk scene, until a friend played him Lightnin' Hopkins' *Blues in the Bottle*. Smither was, appropriately, thunderstruck. "I just couldn't believe the sound he got," recalls Smither, calling in from Boulder, Colorado. "I thought it was two guys playing. I was a child of rock 'n' roll, and here was this guy doing it all by himself! Acoustic blues had to be where rock 'n' roll came from. That's what really woke me up. It was the turning point."

As a fledgling musician, Smither proceeded to absorb all he could from the old country bluesmen. He was inspired by hearing Mississippi John Hurt to develop a laid-back, syncopated fingerpicking style and gentle, gravelly vocals. Never content just to copy, Smither wanted to write and play his own, blues-influenced material. After finishing school, he moved to Cambridge, Massachusetts, to become part of the flourishing singer-songwriter scene there. One of his neighbors was Bonnie Raitt. "We were good friends before either one of us had ever made a record. In fact, for about two years, I didn't even know she played guitar!" Smither says.

Two of Raitt's best-known songs, "Love Me Like a Man" and "I Feel the Same," were penned by Smithers, and she has referred to him glowingly as "my Eric Clapton." Smither himself put out two albums in the early '70s, and recorded a third, *Honeysuckle Dog*, with Raitt, Dr. John, and the late Lowell George (of Little Feat) contributing in the studio. Sadly, the album was never released. "It got lost in the shuffle during a corporate takeover of the label I was on [Poppy Records]," Smither



Bluesman Chris Smither

concert Smither prefers to play on his own. So when the man with the blue Alvarez/Yairi guitar appears in San Francisco at the Noe Valley Ministry on Friday, June 11, he'll be accompanied only by the sound of his boots. "I always have them miked, as I discovered a long time ago that if I couldn't hear my feet, I couldn't play," he explains. "And if people couldn't hear it, then half of it was lost."

Smither has acquired a growing reputation not only as a powerful

He always has his boots miked, because he's discovered that if he can't hear his feet, he can't play.

reveals. "By the end of that, I was stuck with no representation — and I was fucked up, just drinking myself to death."

For the next decade or so, Smither confesses, he did little except drink, and somehow work as a building contractor. Then he got sober, and started to play guitar seriously again. He quit his job, and by a stroke of good fortune, a few days later he was approached by a management agency. "I hadn't written more than two songs in ten years, so I told them: 'It's going to take me a little while. What I really need to do is play gigs constantly for the next 9 months, and things will start to happen.' I had my fingers crossed behind my back," says Smither with a wry laugh. "But I really thought that once I was back into performing shape, the songs would flow again. And they did."

Since then, Smither has gone from strength to strength, releasing six acclaimed albums. On his latest release, *Drive You Home*, like its predecessor, *Small Revelations*, he's backed by a tight combo of session players from Austin, but in

solo performer, but as one of the finest roots-based tunesmiths in America. His songs are meticulously wrought, with fluid melodic structures, clever hooks, and lyrics whose simple, direct language is replete with depth and insight ("My freedom will be measured/ By the length to which I'll disobey").

Having clearly paid his own dues to the blues, Smither has learned from his past masters the value of suggestion and succinctness. "The idea that you have three minutes as a songwriter in which to say something meaningful and memorable is definitely challenging," he says. "The blues provides an example of a rhythmic format for making statements that will stick with people. It has a kind of internal punctuation that, if you handle the lyrics properly, makes them hard to forget. I use that form, and try to fit my own perceptions into it." ▼

Chris Smither plays the Noe Valley Ministry on Fri., June 11 at 8 p.m. For tickets (\$12), call 522-0333.



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June 4	Friday	7:00 pm	<i>The Unbelievable Truth</i>	Hal Hartley	1990
June 4	Friday	9:30 pm	<i>Restaurant</i>	Eric Bross	1998
June 5	Saturday	1:00pm	Panel Discussion		
June 5	Saturday	3:30 pm	<i>Choose Me</i>	Alan Rudolph	1984
June 5	Saturday	6:30 pm	<i>One False Move</i>	Carl Franklin	1991
June 5	Saturday	9:30 pm	<i>On the Ropes</i>	Nanette Burstein and Brett Morgen	1999
June 6	Sunday	1:00 pm	<i>My Dinner with Andre</i>	Louis Malle	1981
June 6	Sunday	4:00 pm	<i>Five Corners</i>	Tony Bill	1988
June 6	Sunday	6:30 pm	<i>Paris is Burning</i>	Jennie Livingston	1990
June 6	Sunday	8:30 pm	<i>Broken Vessels</i>	Scott Ziehl	1998
June 7	Monday	8:00 pm	<i>Drylongso</i>	Cauleen Smith	1998

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OUT&ABOUT



Purple Moon Dance Project members Jill Togawa and Arisika Razak perform *Conceptions* at SomArts. See Friday.

Fri 4

Harvey Milk Civil Rights Academy

Native American Cultural Exhibition & Dance, hosted by Bay Area American Indian Two Spirits (BAAITS), a fundraiser for the 12th Annual International Two Spirit Gathering to be held Labor Day weekend. (Two Spirit Peoples are gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered people of American Indian ancestry.) Includes traditional music, dance and food, art exhibit, raffle, and dance party. A drug- and alcohol-free event. \$5. 7pm-1am. 19th St. and Collingwood. Info: 522-2470, or surf www.geo.to/bayarea2spirits

SomArts Theater

National Queer Arts Festival. Opening night: Purple Moon Dance Project performs "Conceptions," celebrating the multi-faceted experiences of lesbian mothers on their path to parenthood. Artistic direction by Jill Togawa. With dancers/choreographers Arisika Razak and Alena Cawthorne and composers/musicians Afia Walking Tree and Gwen Jones, among others. Includes benefit reception and silent art-auction. 8pm. \$30 opening night; all other shows \$18. Thru 6/13. 934 Brannan St. (btwn. 8th & 9th). 552-1105.

McAteer Theatre

The Music Dept. of City College presents "Lady in the Dark," the 1941 hit musical comedy with music by Kurt Weill, lyrics by Ira Gershwin, and book by Moss Hart. Fully staged, produced with Weill's original orchestration. This is the first event in the worldwide Kurt Weill Centennial Celebration, funded by the Kurt Weill Foundation. 8pm Fridays & Saturdays thru 6/12; 2pm Sunday matinee 6/12. Info: 239-3641; tix: (510) 762-BASS.

Venue 9

"Fanny and Walt," written by Jewel Seehaus, directed by Ann Kuchins. Fanny is a top-notch, tough, independent-minded journalist who sometimes passes as a man; gay poet Walt Whitman finds her fascinating. Their relationship blurs the boundaries between friendship and love, male and female sexuality. With Mark Manske as Walt and Diane Tasca as Fanny, plus Elizabeth Elms, Eric Swartz and Eddie Wallace. June 4-26, Thur-Sat 8pm, Sun matinee 3pm. \$12 Thur & Sun, \$15 Fri & Sat. 252 Ninth St. at Folsom.

Exit Stage Left

Preview: Kaliyuga Arts presents the world premiere of "Pride," a scathing comedy about a gay guy's quest for some kind of permanence in a world where all seems disposable. Written by Myles Weber, directed by John Sowle, and featuring Steven

Patterson, Jett Phakis, Michael McAllister and Erik Kever Ryle. Previews \$10, June 4-5. Regular run \$12, June 7-July 3, 8pm. 156 Eddy St. bet Mason & Taylor. 431-8423.

Exit Theatre

"Problem Child" by George F. Walker, directed by John Warren. A dark comedy about a recovering couple forced to extremes in order to win back custody of their child in foster care. \$14 (\$10 students/seniors). 8pm. Thru 6/26. 156 Eddy St. Tix: 673-3847.

Power Exchange

"Feast III" brings together queers of all tribes for a night of bawdy entertainment and pansexual hijinks. Dungeon bondage/S/M demonstration at 10pm; Sister Roma hosts Tranny Cabaret at 11pm with Tom Orr, Birdie Bob Watt, Johnny Kat, and Kennedy. Comedian Rob Nash headlines on the ballroom's main stage at midnight, with Mistress of Ceremonies Heklina and a bevy of Transnysack beauties, including Lady Sergio, Lemay, Putanesca Jones, Kimo and Patty O'Furniture. Things get fiery at 1am with tribal musicians and fire artists. At 2am, enter the amateur strip-tease contest and receive a New Meat porn video. \$10 before 10pm & \$20 after. Doors at 9pm. 74 Otis St. Info: 332-7848.

Josie's

Sharon McNight performs songs from her forthcoming C&W album *Now & Then*. \$15. 8pm & 10pm. Also on 5/5-6. Josie's Cabaret & Juice Joint, 16th St. @ Market. 861-7933.

Sat 5

Brava!

National Queer Arts Festival presents internationally renowned choreographer Bill T. Jones discussing how his life experiences informed his movement vocabulary. \$15. 8pm. 2781 24th St. at York. Tix/info: 552-7709 or surf www.queerculturalcenter.org

Cowell Theater

The Academy of Ballet presents an evening of dance featuring a demonstration by Academy students followed by Chamberdance, a company of young pre-professional ballet students, performing to Stravinsky's "Concerto in D," the "Blue Bird Pas de Deux," "Tchaikovsky Pas de Deux," and "Rhapsody" movements 1, 4 and 5. \$15. 7pm. Also on 6/6 at 3pm. Fort Mason. Info: 552-1166.

SF Hiking Club

Join other lovers for a hiking challenge encompassing the steep ridges near Livermore. It's hot, dry terrain, relieved by a cool dip in Lake Del Valle. A strenuous 10-mile hike with a 4,000-ft. elevation gain. Meet at 8am under the big Safeway sign at

Market & Dolores. Carpool cost is \$26, to be shared among passengers. Club info: 487-6410.

Harvey Milk Civil Rights Academy

The Malaysian Gay and Lesbian Club's 2nd Annual Food Fair. Includes buffet style fine Malaysian cuisine and dessert, plus raffle-drawing, and a fabulous girlie show you won't soon forget. \$20 advance; \$25 door. 7pm. 19th at Collingwood. Info: 584-1534; surf www.best.com/~aloha/mglc

New Conservatory Theatre Center

Opening night: "Key West," a play by Jack Heifner, directed by Ed Decker. At a clothing-optional resort, two gay men on vacation find their friendship tested when a male stripper, a college student, and a cowboy enter their lives. Thru July 17. \$28 opening night only; otherwise \$16 Thurs & Sun. matinees; \$20 Fri & Sat. 8pm (2pm Sun.). 25 Van Ness Ave., lower lobby. 861-8972.

International Ballroom & Deco Pool

Burning Man presents the Flambe Lounge's 2nd annual "Swim Whim," featuring a water ballet by The Black Rock Synchronized Swimmers. Bring a towel to swim before or after performances. Multiple art installations (including Pepe Ozan's latest, voodoo-inspired BM opera set), laser show, drum circle, DJ dancing. Plus Fat Chance Belly Dance's 3rd Tribe belly-dancers. \$10 (\$2 off in Aqua or swim-themed attire). 21+ . 9pm-2am (water ballet shows at 10pm & 11pm). 50 Oak St. International Ball Room & Deco Pool. Info: (415) 70 FLAME. Advance tix @ www.ticketweb.com

Marlena's Bar

Back by popular demand: "Lip-Sting," "an outrageous drag race," sponsored by Signs for the Future in cooperation with Latin American Theater Artist. Starring Riki Rivers (Richard Gutierrez), Daphney Deluxe (Glen Krumbholz), Grizzilla Presley (Jon Andrew), and Karen Kill (Jeremy Parr). No cover. June 5/12/19/26, 10:30pm. 488 Hayes at Octavia. 864-6672.

Bridge Theatre

Peaches Christ presents "Midnight Mass," the second summer midnight screening of nine films on Saturday nights featuring cat-fighting showgirls, galaxy queens, and Joan Crawford lookalikes, etc. Audiences are encouraged to come in costume, yell at the screen, sing along, and dance. Tonight showing "Polyester (In Odorama)" by John Waters. \$5. 12am. 3010 Geary Blvd.

Mission Cultural Center for Latino Art

Opening reception: The ninth annual Queer Latino Festival kicks off today with a Visual Art Exhibit. Upcoming events include screening of "Star Maps" (6/10), "El Otro Lado" (6/20) and "Cuttin' It Up" (6/24), Mr. & Ms. Safe Gay Latino (6/17), readings, performances, and a tea dance. \$5. 4:30-6pm. 2868 Mission St. Info: 648-3702.

Lone Mountain Conference Center

California Pacific Medical Center presents "Come to the Well," an all-day

Calendare by Mark Mardon



The Dixieland Dykes + 3 play Saturday at Festival in the Gardens.

Garden frolic

It's spring, and what could be nicer than to honor the season with a garden party? Imagine yourself in a Renoir painting, sunlight dappling the grass as you and your friends lounge about among shade trees, gaily picnicking, sipping drinks, exposing yourself to solar rays and letting lots of lovely queer entertainers amuse you all day with dances, comedy, poetry and live music. Wouldn't that be the sweet life?

The place to go for such a treat this weekend will be Yerba Buena Gardens. There, on Saturday, June 5, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., the exceptionally vibrant and multifaceted Jon Sims Center for the Performing Arts will be hosting a free "Festival in the Gardens" for all to enjoy. Featured on the garden's stage throughout the day will be a host of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender performing artists, many of whom developed their material while taking part in the Sims Center's AIRspace artists-in-residence program.

"The variety of performers we have here at the Sims Center is somewhat staggering," says Lauren Hewitt, director of the nonprofit organization that got its start with the San Francisco Lesbian/Gay Freedom Band, founded more than 20 years ago by the late, great baton-twirling dynamo Jon Sims.

Hewitt points to a few of the garden-party offerings as typical of the Sims Center's incredibly broad range of artistic undertakings. Among the selections are highlights of a new opera, *Wuornos*, by Carla Lucero, Gail Wilson's City Swing band, classical dance with Arabesque Ballet, and gravity-defying gymnastic stunts by Cheer San Francisco.

During the day you'll also hear rip-roaring old-fashioned jazz from the Dixieland Dykes + 3, the hauntingly beautiful songs of vocalist and dancer Gabriel Todd, modern jazz with Kathryn Lyle and Rob Chavez, folk and blues by Tuffy Eldridge, flamenco dancing with Nemesio Paredes, uplifting march music with the Freedom Band, and much foot stomping by the Barbary Coast Cloggers. Your hosts for all this and much more will be the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence.

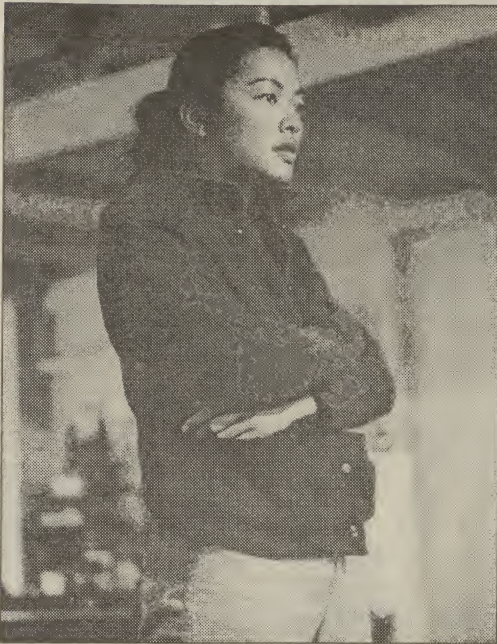
To complete this pretty picture, festival booths offering face painting, ethnic foods, crafts, community information and a bouncing castle will be hosted by Bethany United Methodist Church.

So if you want to put a little spring in your life this Saturday, head down to Yerba Buena Gardens. It'll be pretty as a picture, you and your friends reclining on the grass, entertained by some of the funnest, most talented queer artists in the city. ▼

The Jon Sims Center's "Festival in the Gardens" takes place Saturday, June 5, from 11am to 4pm at Yerba Buena Gardens, 701 Mission St. at Third. Admission is free. For more information, phone 554-0402.



Johnny Kat, John Voldar, Birdie Bob Watt, Kennedy, Tom Orr and Robert Rodriguez are featured performers at "Feast III" at the giant, multilevel Power Exchange sex club and cabaret. See Friday.



A retrospective of artist Bernice Bing's work will take place at SomArts as part of the National Queer Arts Festival. See Thursday.

retreat for women with HIV to focus on rest, relaxation, and rejuvenation. 8am-5pm. 2800 Turk St. at Parker. 923-3106.

SF Street Theater Festival

Wise Fool Community Arts and The 509 Cultural Center/Luggage Store presents the fifth annual "In The Street: SF Street Theater Festival." Dozens of Bay Area artists will convene in the heart of Tenderloin for the exciting summer street fair. Featuring Bandaloo, SF Mime Troop, Idris Ackamoor and Rhodessa Jones, Fat Chance Belly Dance, ABADA Capoeira and many more. June 5-6, 12 am-5pm. Cohen Alley, the 500 blocks of Ellis Street bet Leavenworth and Hyde. Info: 255-5971.

Sun 6

Harvey Milk Civil Rights Academy

National Queer Arts Festival presents acclaimed poets Dorothy Allison (*Bastard Out of Carolina*) and Forrest Hammer (*Call and Response*) reading and discussing their work. \$15. 7pm. 4235 19th St. at Collingwood. Tix/info: 552-7709 or surf www.queerculturalcenter.org

Yerba Buena Center

National Queer Arts Festival: Joe Goode Performance Group presents "Gender Heroes-Part I." Based on interviews with transgendered individuals and cross-dressers from different cultural/ethnic backgrounds, the show uses dance and spoken words to explore the personal journeys toward one's gender identity. \$18-\$25. 8pm. Yerba Buena Center for the Arts Theater. 700 Howard St. 648-4848.

Mon 7

Herbst Theatre

Steve Silver's "Beach Blanket Babylon" celebrates its 25th anniversary with a gala benefit for the Young Conservatory at ACT and the UCSF Cancer Center. Featuring one-night only cameos by Senator Dianne Feinstein as Snow White, former Secretary of State George Shultz as Superman, SF Chief of Protocol Charlotte Shultz as Wonder Woman, Ann Getty as the Pineapple Queen, and Mayor Willie Brown as himself. Also appearing are actor Don Johnson and author Danielle Steel. There will be 24 other benefit performances at Club Fugazi in June. Ticket info: 421-4222.

Mad Magda's

Opening reception: Photographer Arlon presents images from his forthcoming book *I Love the Night Life*. Free. 7-9pm. On display thru June. Mad Magda's Russian Tea Room, 579 Hayes St. 864-7654.

MCC

The Harvey Milk Institute Story Tellers feature spoken word pieces by George Birimisa and students from the Spring Intergenerational Story Telling Workshop. Co-presented with GLOE: Gay and Lesbian Outreach to Elders. \$5-\$10 sliding (NOTAFLOF). Sanctuary, Metropolitan Community Church, 150 Eureka at 18th St. Info: HMI at 552-7200.

Tue 8

MCC

"Transgender Warriors," a panel presentation of modern-day transgender hero/ines. Speakers will share the stories of their journeys as gender outlaws and activists. Featuring Shannon Minter, Susan Stryker, Cecilia Chung, Yoseño V. Lewis, and Shadow Morton (tentative). Part of the 1999 Gender & Sexuality Series at MCC. 7-9pm. Info: 865-2743.

Intersection for the Arts

David Mills performs his work-in-progress, "What I Want," a solo show in which Mills tears through the string of anxious moments that make up life in the big city. Free. 8pm. 446 Valencia St. (btwn: 15th & 16th). 626-2787.

Josie's

"Duboce Triangle," the gay soap opera. Tonight's episode: "Can I See Your Briefs?" by playwright Dean Backus, author of Best of '96 SF Fringe Fest's "Is This Seat Taken?" \$10. Also on 6/9. 16th St. at Market. 8pm. 861-7933.

Wed 9

Harvey Milk Civil Rights Academy

National Queer Arts Festival. "2 Decades of Decadence: The Sisters of



Peaches Christ leads Midnight Mass at the Bridge Theater. See Saturday.

Perpetual Indulgence." Take a romp through queer history as seen through the eyes of Sr. Phylis Stein, Mistress of Sistory, who has spent tireless hours digging up as much dirt about this Order of queer nuns. Find out how the sisters have used performance to engage in activism and fundraising for countless nonprofit organizations. \$10. 8pm. 4235 19th St. at Collingwood. Tix: 552-7709 or surf www.queerculturalcenter.org

ATA Gallery

Frameline and Genital Access Productions present "Queer Odd Wednesdays at ATA," showcasing videos from Frameline's collection. Followed by an open screen of local queer visual artists. Tonight: "Dyke Drama," a compilation of four short lesbian stories about couples, cruising, and coming out. \$5. 8pm. 992 Valencia St. 824-3890.

Thu 10

SomArts Center

National Queer Arts Festival symposium: Contemporary Issues of Asian American Artists, in conjunction with the exhibit "They Hold Up Half the Sky," a collaborative project comprising two major exhibitions: "Bernice Bing: A Memorial and Retrospective," and "Of Our Own Voice: 10th Anniversary Celebration of the Asian American Artists Association." \$5-\$10 suggested donation. 7-9pm. 934 Brannan St. Info: 552-7709, or surf www.queerculturalcenter.org

A Different Light

Reading and book signing by contributors to *Dangerous Liaisons: Blacks, Gays, and the Struggle for Equality*, edited by Eric Brandt. Featuring Jewelle Gomez, Darieck Scott, and Brandt. Free. 7:30pm. 489 Castro St. 431-0891.

Lakeview Branch, Oakland Public Library

Poetry reading & potluck for Lake Merritt area lesbians & friends. Hosted by Susan Kay Gilbert in celebration of Pride Month. Neophyte poets welcome. Delicious dishes encouraged. Free. 7-9pm. 550 El Embarcadero at Grand. Info: (510) 238-7344.

Center for African & African American Art & Culture

"Takin' It To the Roots: The Perils and Promises of the Internet for Artists of Color," a performance and discussion about the World Wide Web in our arts communities, featuring music and dance by saxophonist Idris Ackamoor, performance artist Pearl Ubungen, and guest speakers Denise Rose Torres and Randolph Belle. Sponsored by Arts Online/Media Alliance. Free. 7-9pm. 762 Fulton St. (at Webster).

ODC Theater

"Nesting Dolls in Concert," featuring the Bay Area's punk-lyric contemporary dance company, directed by choreographer Cid Pearlman. Original compositions by Erling Wold. 8pm. Thru 6/13. 3153 17th St. 863-9834.

New Conservatory Theatre

Preview: "Parallel Lives," based on "The Kathy and Mo Show," recounts two supreme goddesses planning the birth of the world with the relish of two sadistic suburban wives decorating a living room. Written by Mo Gaffney and Kathy Najimy. Directed by Kathryn G. McCarty. Part of the Celebrating Women Festival. Previews (\$10) June 10-12, 17 & 18. Regular run: June 19-July 31; \$12 Thur.; \$16 Fri. & Sat.; \$14 Sun. matinee. 25 Van Ness, lower lobby. 861-8972.

WANNA SUBMIT?

Send your calendar event listings to:

Mark Mardon
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Bay Area Reporter
395 Ninth Street
San Francisco, CA 94103

Deadline is the Friday before issue date.

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The IML '99 winners chosen in Chicago last weekend are (L to R) Sean Reilly of Long Beach, 1st runner-up; Bruce Chopnik, the new Int'l Mr. Leather '99; and 2nd runner-up Mike Hargis of San Diego.

Bruce Chopnik wins IML '99

by Mr. Marcus

Bedlam erupted inside Chicago's Congress Theatre last Sunday night, May 30, when Bruce Chopnik — Mr. Rocky Mountain Leather — of Denver was named International Mr. Leather 1999.

Only moments before, Sean Reilly of Long Beach (Mr. Pistons Leather) had been named 1st runner-up, while Mike Hargis (Mr.

San Diego Leather) had been named 2nd runner-up.

The crowd roared its approval. The parade of pulchritude onstage was instrumental in keeping the audience in high expectation throughout; the competition was very, very tough and the judges were sweating as much as the contestants.

It wasn't easy for judges Thom Dombkowski, Tony Mills, Tony

DeBlase, Spencer Bergstedt, Don Bastian, Graylin Thornton, Fred Katz, Tom Stice and yours truly. The field of 52 contestants was whittled down to 20 semi-finalists as follows: Greg Miller, Mr. Leather Sydney; Dirk Grundmann, Mr. German Leather; Robert Isava, Mr. South Atlantic Leather; John Zimmer-

next page ►



EVENTURES IN LEATHER

Thursday, June 3

Almost all 12 bare chest calendar winners for the 2000 edition will compete tonight for the cover spot on the 15th edition, which will be in color and photographed by Jim Geras. The proceedings begin at 2100 sharp, so be sure to attend the thrilling conclusion of calendar competition.

Big Basket Contest at The Edge (if Eric got back from Chicago intact. He was having such a great time at the IML festivities!). The action begins at around 2100 and there's a beer party and a basket display. See The Old Bag drool!

Deadline is midnight tonight if you're going to enter the Mr. Lone Star Contest taking place on Saturday, June 5.

Friday, June 4

It's the last Friday of the month and you know what that means: **Boot Night** at the Loading Dock, sponsored by Stompers Boots. Be there around 2100 if you want some hoots from guys in boots! Wear yours!

Saturday, June 5

Alameda Co. Leather Corps Rub-A-Dub fishing party from 0700 to 1400 for \$10, which includes food, beverages and a fishing derby at Lake Chabot Marina. Call (510) 582-2198 for directions. Tickets in advance at the Turf Club with a \$50 prize for the heaviest string of fish. For more details, phone (510) 278-0677.

Phoenix Uniform Club swap and sale meet plus a beer party for \$6 and \$1 hot dogs at the Eagle from 1900-2200. Dress in uniform, swap, sell, trade same.

Mr. Lone Star Contest at the Lone Star Saloon from 1500 to 1700 with Danny Williams emceeing. No details, but this one is always a fun event!

Kinky Carnival, 1300-1700, for only \$5 at the Cat Club (1190 Folsom) with pleasure/pain crafts fair, whips, floggers, paddles, body art and jewelry, fetish wear, lingerie and dungeon equipment. Details? Call Vicky Gold 282-6538.

In Baltimore? Today is their big gay pride parade but no details at my deadline.

Wednesday, June 9

Golden Shower Buddies splash around at 933 Harrison tonight. Doors open 2000-2300. Many flavors. call 863-HEAD.

Weekend June 10-13

No details at my deadline, but The 15 Association is staging their **Boot Camp XI** weekend run.

Friday, June 11

Ms. San Francisco Leather contest at Club Townsend tonight at Club Townsend. Ducats are \$20 advance, \$25/door and available at Daddy's and Mister S. Shan Carr will emcee. Apps available by calling 227-6002 or email to: MsSFLc-ntst@aol.com.

Saturday, June 12

Russian River Mr. Drummer and **Boy** contests tonight at River Business bar in Guerneville with Lenny Broberg emceeing with Shan Carr at 2000. Winner will compete at Mr. Northern California Drummer next month.

Cal Eagles' one-day ride to the wine country, Valley of the Moon departing from Daddy's at 1000 with a full tank of gas, money for bridge tolls and gasoline. For details, call 267-0560

Tonight is the **Closet Ball** too at the Gift Center Pavilion with virgin boys going in drag for the Closet Ball Queen. What happened to last year's winner?

Lipstory lesson

by Sweet Lips

Yes, dear readers, it's true, and you can look it up in your history book: Father of our Country George Washington had two dogs, named Truelove and Sweetlips. As you know, your mother Sweet Lips goes back quite a way, and Georgey and I were very close. He might have chopped down that cherry tree, but he could get it up again, too.

Emperor Steve Rauscher wishes to remind you all that tickets for the fabulous Closet Ball are selling like hormone-induced hotcakes; call 290-2676 for information. Remember, it's Sat., June 12 at the Gift Center Pavilion, 888 Brannan St. Doors open at 7 p.m.,

and show begins promptly at 8 p.m.

Moving on to weightier topics, those bears at the Lone Star Saloon will be having their "Mayhem" Beverage Benefit on Sun., June 6 from 4-8 p.m.

It's a busy weekend, since on Sat., June 5, at 1 p.m., the Giraffe Video and Chandelier Lounge will be having a benefit auction for David "Waggy" Wagstaff. Auction items are urgently needed. A special buffet will be catered by Dennis ("Teepees and Tapas") Tyler.

When I look into my special

Polkstrasse mirror, whom do I see? I see that handsome Michael Valdez, still on the plank at the new Swallow on Polk, and boy, don't they feature some great piano entertainment?

I see the sweetheart of all bartenders, Marlow, still holding forth at Uncle Bert's Bar in the Castro, and still looking hot. Sweet Lips, by comparison, gets hot flashes.

One last word on the Closet Ball:

getcher party trays now! Call chef Dennis ("Tabasco 'n' Tamales") Tyler at 567-8782 by June 10. They serve 10 people with appetites as big as Sweet Lips. ▼

Cocktail Hour

Mister Marcus

◀ page 48

man, Mr. LURE, New York; Kevin Powers, Mr. Cell Block/Male Hide Leather; Glenn Mlake, Mr. D.C. Eagle; Andrew Sagan, Mr. Wisconsin Leather; Scott Beggs, Mr. Chicago Leather; Ken Claude, Mr. Texas Leather; William Schindler, Mr. Los Angeles Leather; Joshua Smith, Mr. Minnesota Leather; Dean Ross, Mr. Mid-Atlantic Leather and Ottawa-Hull; Maverick Reynolds, Mr. Ohio Valley Leather; and Jarrod Doak, Mr. Missouri Leather. San Francisco's three entries, Werner Tillinger, BJ Cavnor, and Glennon Sutter, were among the 20 finalists. Bravo to all!

The emcees, Queen Cougar and Frank Nowicki, were glamorously garbed in dazzling, almost matching outfits and they kept the show moving along with clever and fitting repartee during the various judging segments.

Between the judging segments, Leather Pride Flag creator Tony DeBlase was honored for his valuable contribution to leatherdom, and the dashing Men of Discipline from both the Washington, DC and San Francisco chapters accepted the original flag to carry and display during the DC Pride Parade. Their precision military maneuvering was as regimented as any honor guard you could imagine.

Later, after a stirring speech made by former IMLs, Jill Carter, a collection was made from the audience for the Leather Archives & Museum, and the auction of a leather pride ring which was sold for \$1,700. The grand total collected from the very generous audience was about \$7,000.

The night before, Saturday, with an all-day pre-judging marathon, the scoring continued with all 52 contestants creating bedlam at the Plumber's Union Hall in the physique scoring segment.

Thirty contestants were interviewed on Saturday and the remainder were interviewed on Sunday morning.

Needless to say, the Congress Hotel was, again, the center of most interaction. Well-meaning suggestions submitted to the hotel's management fell on deaf ears or were ignored, so it was slow bar service with hefty prices, and the same in the Gazebo Dining Room. The IML 2000 contest returns to the Congress, but don't kill the messenger!

The usual weekend marriages transpired; I heard of no divorces. There were notices prohibiting overt sexual activity in the lobby, the tea rooms and the stairwells, but you know most delegates largely ignored the ban.

On Thursday night, May 27, a healthy crowd materialized at the world-famous Cell Block to witness Cain Berlinger's first effort at producing a leather contest. He managed (with a lot of help from his friends) to enlist eight candidates for the title with Queen Cougar and Frank Nowicki doing the emcee honors. With an auction, drawings and the scoring

segments, it was quick and to the point and by 2230, it was over, with Ariq Robinson taking the title. Thank goodness. Mr. Robinson will not disappoint with skeletons from a drag queen closet coming to the fore.

The large influx of people for the IML contest and the Great Lakes Bears gathering made for a very busy weekend in all the bars, shops and restaurants. The 3-level leather mart boasted some 190 vendors with a magnificent array of leather and related fetish gear, jewelry, and even SMMILE had a booth touting the Dore Alley Fair and the Folsom Street Fair. R.J. Chaffin did a magnificent job laying out the whole thing.

On a scale of 1 to 10, IML 99 scored a solid 10. With Brian-Mark Conover almost causing the whole thing being shut down for baring the new tattoos on his bodacious butt in the lobby of the host hotel, IML 99 went on without a hitch. Was there any scandal you ask? You know the routine. This is the "official" report on IML. As you all know, IML-Part II next week will have the "official" dish. Stay tuned. ▼

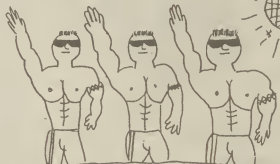
Single Faggot

by Michael X.

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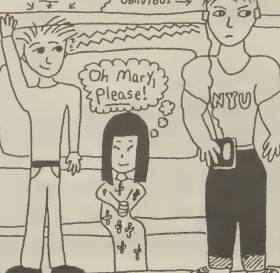
singlefaggot@nycncl.com

I wander around the gay ghetto and it's clear; human cloning is already a reality



I've cruised cute guys on the subway 1,372 times. I've had exactly 1,372 failed attempts.

Provocative eye contact → Totally Obvious →



I take my anti-depressants with a large Cuban coffee, just for the extra buzz.



Oh God, I just realized I'm not partying like it's 1999.

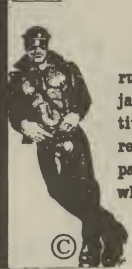


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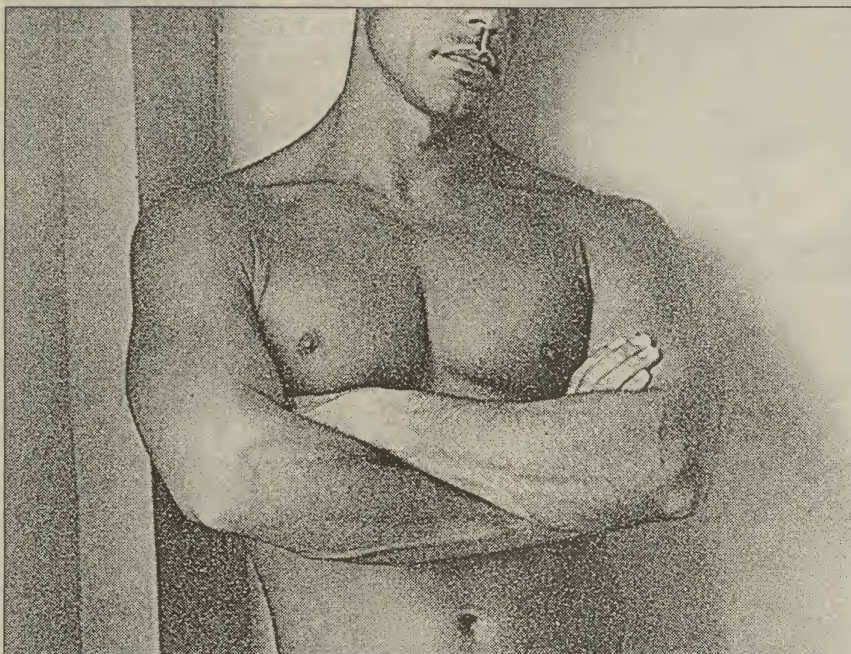
hey, buddy

photo: Greg Day, www.mandreams.com

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PARTING GLANCES

Home Depot Emeryville May 1st
Hey Jim. The two Johns here- We stopped and talked about in the Oakland Hills and in the city- would like to touch base with you. ☎ 7500

33 Bus Sat 5-1 3:30PM
You: bald, moustache, goatee and white pants, very attractive. Me: dark hair moustache, sleeveless vest. Smiled at each other. Not enough time to talk... How about dinner? ☎ 7501

Me Bright Orange Sweat Shirt
U, white tee, big blue eyes and goatee eating sandwich with friend at Baghdad Cafe, Sat. May 1st. We had lots of eye contact couldn't connect, was with mom. Call me, let's meet, talk, play. ☎ 7502

Hath/ 5/2 At 3:30 Balcony
You: Longhaired blonde, Me: Longhaired brunette. Enjoyed our conversation. Regret not following you after parting glance. Perhaps future movie partner or more? Attracted. Call ☎ 7503

Steamworks April 5
You: East Bay originally from Spain. Me: older, grey hair S.F. You came into my room, much fun, great kisses. Want more. Have car will travel. Call ☎ 7504

We Met At Mack
Hoped to meet again-but its closed. You pounded my hungry hole- you 30's, med build, rock hard tool- me same. Wm, flexible, eager to please. Call lets do it in private. ☎ 7505

5/3- Washington Mutual@Taraval
You: Dark hair, carhart pants, jeep. Me: short hair, glasses, beard. We talked outside. I was too shy to ask you out. Coffee? Dinner? Pls. Call. ☎ 7506

Bus Stop 18th And Castro 4/28
U-20 something, backpack, headphones; Me: 40ish, bl. leather jacket, sunglasses. We cruised; you got off at Davies stop. Want you madly! ☎ 7508

38 Geary You W/ Sewing Machine
Saturday, May 8, 2:30pm. You got off at Hyde. Me: seat behind, black cargo pants, denim jacket. I have holes that need darning. ☎ 7601

Kabuki/ Bath's Tue 5/4 4:15pm
Sitting area drinking tea, you there having coffee, navel ring with orn. Looked for you but you left. Should have talked. Like to see you. ☎ 7605

The Cafe On May 2
You with friend, me with a date. You told me I was handsome, think you are too. You live on 18th street, from New York. Your name is Jeff? Call me. ☎ 7701

Kevin From England 5/3 1:30pm
I'm a gentleman farmer who takes photos of friends. Bought as many frames as you did glasses in Macy's. Come see my farm. Call James! ☎ 7600

Midnight Sun Mon 5/17 7PM
You: Light featured moustache? standing 3-feet away, yet too far. You have beautiful deep penetrating eyes w/ a smile that emerges to make promises. This is a like attribute for me as well. We should have spoken- here's the chance. ☎ 7702

Kinkos Van Ness 5/17 12:30PM
You: using color copier, ruggedly handsome. Me: smiling in the cashier line, boy-next-door type. Would like to assist your administration of duties. ☎ 7700

Rosie's Cantina Mon May 5, 6pm
You: blond, cute, black shirt, eating alone. Me: dark hair, glasses, black jacket. Burrito to go. I should have stayed. Got shy. Let's meet. ☎ 7604

Fell Against You On Bart
Fri. 4/30, 8:20am, I got on at Powell, fell when train started, you 5'8", grey hair, sports coat, polo shirt, got off at Montgomery. Me: 5'7", trim, grey hair, blue jacket. Coffee? ☎ 7606

Tony M. - The Crunch Gym
You came to the gym only once. Worked your cute little buns off. Drop the big mac and come back. Love, Joan. ☎ 7507

Latin Guy Eating Lunch On 24St
You: Latin guy, outside, with green shirt & jeans on. You were with your dog. Me: tall, black jacket, jeans and black & yellow hat. Call me. ☎ 7509

Carl's Junior Weds. Nt. Security
You: Intensely masculine, gold star badge, nice arms/tattoo, baseball cap. Me: nervous, attracted, came back twice, too shy to speak, read book. Want loving, long term. ☎ 7603

Ian: Epicenter Afterhour 5/16
You- 6', WM, dark curly hair/goatee, slender/fit, and a cute smile. Me- 6'11", BM, short dark hair/goatee. I saw you, we danced, then lost you in the crowd. WOW! You're very attractive. Coffee? Dinner? Call. ☎ 7803

A Pump Away At The Market Shell
You: green Acura, grey hair, great body. Me: black Nissan, greying hair, curious yellow. Washed my window 3x to check you out. Still wish I hadn't changed lanes. ☎ 7800

You Waved To Me At The Cafe'
Me: Tony; you: John. 1st met at the Cafe' 12/98 and I took you home. Saw you again Sun. 5/16, but lost you in the crowd. Would like to talk. ☎ 7801

Steamworks Sunday May 16
You-Asian, me-older caucasian. You came into my room. We did it on my stomach and back-very nice. Would love to meet you again. Please call me! ☎ 7803

Folsom Gulch 5/18 7:30
You: short brown hair, arm in cast, sweater with red stripe. Me: tan shorts, blue T-shirt. Us: hot! Want to see you again. ☎ 7804

Me Redhair. You Muscular/Tatt
We played @ BBS Bam 5/1. You whispered something in my ear- would like to meet for coffee to pursue. ☎ 7602

Pepsi One @ Bell Mkt 4/16
Could not respond to your ad before expired due to travel. Please contact me. Been thinking about you. More discussion definitely necessary. Fizz-fizz-fizz. ☎ 7805

Howdy Mr. Red Goatee
Red shirt to match, wranglers & cowboy wallet. 5/24 evening. B of A, then Market St. Me: horsehoe moustache with dog. This god hearted cowboy took notice. Would be honored to hear from you. ☎ 7808

You Handsome Devil
In that '67 Ford Galaxie convertible. Crossed paths around town, many times. I'd really like to go for a ride (in your car)! ☎ 7806

Escny Pizza Sun 5/16 1:00pm
Haight Street. You red sweatshirt. Me green t-shirt, shorts, back from B to B race. You expressed interest but unable to exchange numbers because of your young female companion. Please call! ☎ 7807

SEEKING RELATIONSHIP

Latino New In Santa Cruz Area
25, 5'6" 170, medium build complexion, black hair, goatee masculine, str8 acting, attractive, looking to meet guys 25-45 in the area 4 friendship & more, be honest & serious, mature. ☎ 7510

ISO Sincere Younger Partner
You desire a balanced, growth oriented relationship while being sexually top identified. I'm a fit, 50's GWM arts professional and we are HIV-, nonsmokers/users, open minded emotionally available. ☎ 7511

Boiysh, Smooth, VGL, GWM, 150
5'10", 38, bl/br, HIV-, mostly bottom. ISO in-shape tops 30-45, any race. Muscular/ alt. rock A+ open to possibilities for LTR to just (safe) fun. No sub abuse, dishonesty or flakes, please. ☎ 7513

Namaste
We are here briefly. The spiritual is our true home. Physical passion a joy, heart and soul connection bliss. GWM 50, 6'0", 200lbs. Aware, honest, compassionate pls. call. Recovering men welcome. ☎ 7514

Nice Hard Dick 8" For You Enjoy
Horny Brazilian, 36, 5'7" 132lbs, masculine, clean cut, hair, eyes and skin brown. You're handsome GWM or Latino, between 18-34, hungry nice butt. My heart'll go on, I'll fill you with love. ☎ 7515

Mentor And Companion
GWM 57, handsome, uncult, 6'175 bl/br HIV- shaved cockballs. Seeks smooth, slim, attractive uncult guys 18-30 for LTR. Serious only. N/S. ☎ 7516

Chubby Guy Blk And Young
Seeks nice-guy, small. It's all good. Me: 26, 5'11", about 325#, honey brown skin, masculine and romantic. You: 18-39, cute and affectionate. Friendship or sex is cool too, I'm open. ☎ 7517

GBM Seeks GWM East Bay
GBM positive 46yo seeks GWM. 40-50yrs. I am 5'11" 190lbs. bmb/bm attractive. Tired of bars- friendship. LTR all possible. Be weight/height proportionate. ☎ 7518

Consider This: GWM, 29, 6', 170#
Seeking like minded. Sports, love, music, sex, work, media, school, handsome, healthy, non-fal/fem. Interested? Won't waste your time. LTR. Just meet me. ☎ 7520

Attractive Latino
Good looking Latino 33yo, dark hair, brown eyes, goatee. Professional, looking for GWM between 26-40yo for friendship or more. I like: dining out, travel, hiking, just call me. ☎ 7521

GWM Seeks Sweetheart
ISO a warm, caring, affectionate GWM, GWM, 34-44, HIV-, & who might enjoy bicycling, massage, dining out, & kissing & cuddling. Me: GWM, 40, 5'9", 175lbs. HIV-, auburn red/blue. ☎ 7522

Overwhelmingly Normal GWM
Me: 38, 6', 170, bright, attractive, HIV-, stable, fun, sense of humor, varied interest. You: GWM, 35-45, secure with yourself, fun, interesting. Dating, fun, LTR? ☎ 7607

GWM 33 Sk Latine/ Asian Partner
Me: want long-term only. 110, 5'5", dk hr, hairy, vers. Enjoy classical music, picnics, anti-materialistic. You: 18-30, slim like me. Spiritually interested agnostic, non-political. ☎ 7608

Find Meaning In Your Life
Cultured, passionate, suave, muscular, in-shape, emotionally solid, supportive, GWM, 154#, 5'9", 47, loves travel old movies, pets, home and meaningful communication, seeks any race 30-45, slim, sincere, ns, nd. ☎ 7713

Partner Wanted!!
Handsome, GWM 52 deaf, looking for a handsome partner. No drugs/alcohol. HIV- any race, responsible. Preferably younger than I am. Call anytime before 7:00pm. ☎ 7610

"Armageddon Of Beef!"
Beefy, hairy, blond top, goatee, 40's German-Italian, 6', 180, professional desired by sexy, GBM, caramel brown, 40, goatee, writer into jazz, romance, cooking, arts, dogs, sex and monogamy. ☎ 7611

Snuggle Mate Wanted
GWM, 41, 6', 165lbs. Half-Italian/half-German, brown/hazel, beard. Interests include bridge, metaphysics, massage, c/w dancing, poetry. Looking for lean guy 20-50. ☎ 7612

Seeking Masochist
Rope bondage master, ISO serious masochist for partnership, who enjoy clothpins, flogging etal for exploration, pain & pleasure. You be in-shape & serious. I'm 5'9", 185lb, warm & experienced. Relationship oriented. ☎ 7613

WM ISO Asians 30 To 50
6', 160#, reddhead/blue, tattoos, very sensitive, seeking fit Asian guy for hot fun, maybe more. Should be honest, adventurous and masculine. I am 30yo. ☎ 7614

Hairless Bear
HIV+ WM, 29, brwn-brn, 190# 5'5." Likes to cuddle, kiss. Versatile bottom; seeks masculine top, 25-40, great sense of humor & sincere. What's Up! ☎ 7615

A Submissive With Facial Hair
A good heart and a nice ass needing attention. Desire verbal, responsible, h/wt proportionate, 25-50yrs. HIV- I'm 5'10", br/bl, 175lbs. dominant, moustache/ goatee, many interests. Single only. ☎ 7616

Handsome Asian For GWM
Asian, 29yrs old, 5'10" 160lbs. Very smooth, swimmer's build. Body is looking for GWM for fun and more. You: handsome, mainly, fit 25-40yrs old only, HIV-, and hairy A+. ☎ 7703

Very Positive
Handsome, sensual, secure man (6', 165lbs, 44) seeks good-looking man in his 30s for relaxed life of travel and conversation. We both have intellect, wit and good manners. ☎ 7704

Educated African American
Young & cute 28, 5'6" 170# ISO friendship/LTR with honest good looking intelligent HIV- single guy 23-35. I enjoy dancing, cooking, the beach & being romantic. Serious reply only! ☎ 7705

Let's Get Together
I'll satisfy your needs, we'll both reach cloud nine with happiness, any race and age. I'm not a horny for you ☎ 7706

Brazilian Hot Passion
Hot versatile South American 150#, 5'10", bmb/gm, smooth body, gym toned, uncult, super sensual, luscious kisser, HIV+, super healthy/athletic. ISO fun guys to connect. ☎ 7519

Handsome Italian
40, 6'2", 185lbs into fitness, travel, romance and quiet times, seeks another HIV negative Latin man who is sincere and romantic for monogamous relationship. ☎ 7707

Coming Out Guide In Future?
Not finding man? Touch of insecurity? Life is cabaret only on screen! Seek males with sense humor seeking reality. All races (styles) encouraged. 50yo GWM emotionally avail, sex optional. ☎ 7708

At Last I'm Here To Serve You
You: Bi or GWM 18-55yo, HIV-, top, size does not matter, husky a plus & horny. Me: Filipino, 36yo, HIV-, 5'9", satisfaction guaranteed by me. ☎ 7512

Seeking Special Young Man
Attr. affectionate older GWM, 75, 5'7", 168, seeks a serious gdlk HIV-romantic 18-45 man for on-going intimate meaningful sex. Fantasies explored is desired. ☎ 7709

Single Hot GAM Wanted By GJM35
U- simple, hot, with a life & brain. Me: 5'6" 165 hot & hairy Jewish man. We like musclemen to working out. No one nighters. "Marry me!" ☎ 7609

Seeking Romance, Love & Friendship
You are under 45 conservative, clean cut, in-shape with morals, values, integrity. I'm 33 5'9" 155lbs. with same qualities. Not into bars/drugs. Let's talk and explore the possibilities. ☎ 7710

Skinny Older Top
GWM, 41, 5'11", 125, balding grey, blue seeking thin/ skinny bottom for monogamous LTR. Affectionate, active, introspective, intelligent, caring guy seeks similar. SF/Peninsula. ☎ 7711

Nationality-Mixed
Seeking males 18-30 for safe sex and possible friendship. Hrs. clean shaven, big swollen nipples a plus. Black male, muscular chest 49", large crouch, aggressive love making. ☎ 7712

Slap Me And Prove I Am Wrong!
I say that strong, healthy, low-voiced nymgtoned masculine Asian men don't exist. I am load-laden Italian. My filled pinata awaits butch Asian buddy, if you exist. ☎ 7714

Insatiable Fil/Am Total Bottom
Very youthful 48yo looks 30's I love to such and get my shaved pussy ass get fucked 59" 160lbs clean shaven HIV- It smoker, non drinker loves good smoke seeks tops any race must be 8+. ☎ 7715

GWM Seek Man Of Color
For friendship, sex, possible LTR. 5'10", 170# blonde, bottom, HIV+ - Like the arts, outdoors. You be kind, gentle. Thanks. ☎ 7809

Dad Ready To Hold You
Very affectionate sincere, professional, spiritually conscious, gym fit, top in my 50's, seeking you, tender slim young son, who know how to love. (Not for \$). ☎ 7810

BAR TALK

PERSONALS ARE FREE!

CATEGORY

- Parting Glances ☐
Seeking Relationship ☐
Seeking Adventure ☐
Lesbian ☐
Fetishes ☐
Couples ☐
Others ☐

You must use this form to submit ads. Deadline for ads is **TUESDAY** at 5 PM, for the following week's issue. New ads run for three consecutive weeks. You will be notified by mail with information on how to leave and retrieve messages from your mailbox ad. Print clearly. No ads will be accepted without valid address, telephone number and legible text. The Bay Area Reporter reserves the right to edit ads. One ad per customer per week.

Name _____ Daytime Telephone _____
Address _____ Evening Telephone _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Headline, 30 characters maximum

Write the rest of your ad here, 30 words maximum

MAIL FORM TO: BAR Talk, Bay Area Reporter, 395 Ninth Street, San Francisco, CA 94103

Att. Big And Tall Admirers
GWM 41 6'8", 350# Artist/Gourmet seeks dates. Into all sports esp. Giants and 49ers, fine dining, movies, theatre, gay events, museums, Fri. night parties. Age/race unimportant. ☎ 7811

Nice Guy Looking For Love
Me: GWM, 40, 5'7", 140#, shavedhead, ns (3). You: taller than me, in-shape, ns. References and interest available on request. ☎ 7812

Possible Romance
I'm seeking a guy under 40, White or Latino for a possible LTR. I'm Latino, Mexican-American, 28, 5'7", 165lbs, stocky, muscular, gradstudent. ☎ 7813

SEEKING ADVENTURE

In Your Lap

Sexy boy 31, slim build, seeks big brother to sit me in his lap, jack me off slowly, while looking into my eyes, make me squirt. You're in control. ☎ 7523

Cocksucker On Call

Excellent cocksucker ready for big cocks that need draining on a reg. basis. Me: 5'8", 150 lbs, taller than me, hung and horny. ☎ 7524

East Bay White Bottom

Horny for a Black or Latin top to service. I'm 6'155 brbl HIV-. Like to suck, fuck & rim. U/C? Would like to dock. ☎ 7525

Like Get Fucked Like To Suck
GWM 52 170 5'11" n/s, n/d, like to suck and get fucked and play around. Age and race no factor also video. Please call. ☎ 7526

Hung Tops Wanted

81 bottom guy who is eager to please. GWM, 45, 6', 155lb. no attitude, HIV+. ☎ 7527

You Have 10 Minutes...

To drain Oakland's blackest, juiciest, sweetest love gun. No beginners, beepers, beards/goatees (they scratch). All races and ages welcome. Experts only please. Thanks. ☎ 7528

Slender Or Small Men 18-35

Wanted by 54yo/masseur who enjoys massaging lean or small men. Free prof, licensed one hour Swedish massage with oil or lotion. Haight/panhandle area. ☎ 7529

I Want An Asian Bottom

ISO Asian ass to rim & fuck; you will be pleased. GWM 35 good looks & knows how to use his cock. ☎ 7530

Cute Husky Bi Boy

Gdly bi WM 5'9", 180 brbl, 7" wbig, beefy muscular legs+ butt, cute face & long, hot tongue seeks gay/bl WM for long oral sessions. Mon/Thurs. days best. ☎ 7531

Blow Job For Hot Jocks

Oral service performed on your tool by cute WM 30. U are 18-35, in good shape, uncult, white, cocky, masculine. No reciprocation. ☎ 7532

Foreigner- Bottom- Wanted

81 healthy top man 53, 200, 5'9" sincere very clean looking for healthy HIV- bottom man for a good time, anytime. Oral ok. East Bay. ☎ 7533

Financial District

Healthy, congenial, in-shape mid-aged guy, ultra-discreet, slim, balding with dark beard; provides efficient, courteous oral service in your office after work. ☎ 7534

Jack Butt

40s, 6' 180# hunky East Bay white bottom seeks Black/Latino muscular top studs. I'm hungry and eager for long, hard pounding. Your buddies serviced too. ☎ 7535

I'll Blow Your Mind

And your big juicy cock. Lay back & enjoy the best from expert cocksucker. I'm in-shape, 5'7, 5'11", 170, hairy and always ready. You be trim, well-hung & under 45. ☎ 7536

Seeking Hungry Cocksucking Pig
In-shape, nice looking, muscular GWM. Looking for hungry cocksucking pig who likes to eat ass and into serious ass play. Must be fit, nice looking, 25-35 and loves to party. ☎ 7537

Cocksucker Takes It

Hot lips, tongue sucks u cut WM wbig thick cocks n balls kick back for complete satisfaction. ☎ 7538

Uncut, Mexican Or Latin Studs

21-45 wanted by tattooed white boy, 38, bottom 9" cut who likes to suck & lick forehead. My place or yours? ☎ 7539

Erotic Body Work For Asians

Slim GWM provides total pleasure body rub for fit Asians. Tell me what you want. ☎ 7617

Ass Massage-Erotic Spanking

I want to look at, touch, squeeze, massage, tickle, probe, spank & screw your butt. Me: attrac, GWM, 46, 6'5", 250lbs. brown hair/moustache, hairy chest/stomach. Your: attractive GM/white, Asian, Latin, slim, smooth/moderate body hair. ☎ 7618

Cocksucker Alert!!!

This big-dicked dad wants to be serviced on a regular basis. I'm 58, 5'11", 168, trim, athletic, and hung big. Ub trim, under 40 and have a hungry mouth or hole. ☎ 7619

Tell Me To Get On My Knees & Suck

Yes sir! 34 good looking bottom boy submissive & open minded, looking for dominant verbal guys my age or younger. Roleplay, groups Hispanics or hung cowboys a plus. ☎ 7620

Toned Blonder Runner

Boish, smooth, very gdlyk GWM, 38, 5'10", 150, blyr, HIV-, mostly bottom. ISO in-shape tops 30-45, any race. Muscular/attrac. rock all pluses. Open to possibilities from LTR to just (safe) fun. No sub. abuse or dishonesty or flakes, please. ☎ 7621

Tight Asian Bottom Insatiable

5'9" 150lbs, brbl clean shaven very cute looks 30's deep throat tight deep ass. seeks tops only. Any race who are at least 8" dd free it! smoke non drinker. Love all but pain. East Bay or Bay Area Blacks welcome most. ☎ 7622

ISO Suckee Who Shoot Big Loads

Hard! Straights, repeaters. 8 1/2" rack hard/uncut. Maybe: rimming/drinking piss/savoring cheese. Nein: baseball caps/skateboards/ facial hair/ chit chat/ gay camp/cast. ☎ 7623

Just Shut Up And Ride

WM, 34, 5'10" 200lbs, blond/ blue muscle 48" ch 32" w 18" arms- wants good looking masculine men to pump/ get pumped. Also love to get massaged and jerked off- anytime. ☎ 7624

Long Hot Sessions

Vers, well built, 5'11" hung big. Needs well built men (20's-30's), hairy with cut cock. Want long, hot sessions to eat, fuck, suck, get fucked. ☎ 7626

Free Massage For Athletes & B.B.

Great massage given by a very hirsute, hairy, middle aged prof. Very discreet. ☎ 7627

8 Big Inches Seeks Relief!

If you are a friendly bottom who wants to be filled by a handsome goatee, in-shape blond top, your my guy. Let's get my 8 inches in you. ☎ 7628

Sexy GAM Seeks GWM Playmates

GAM, 31, 5'10", 150lbs, athletic, boy-next-door seeks WM (21-35) for soft kisses, hard embraces, and wild sex! Blondes a plus. ☎ 7629

In Need Of Diaper Degradation!

6'3", 30yo, handsome, ISO serious degradation. In need of long spankings while wearing dirty diapers. Tie me down, feed me x-lax, or give me enemas. This big sissy needs it! ☎ 7630

XXX

Looking for a sexy, unusual, passionate, open individual for erotic times together. Me: 31, thin and not much into the scene. ☎ 7631

Submissive Dad In Sonoma Co.

Wants to be dominated by slender son, 18-35. Tell me how to please you. I'm generous, fun, attractive, imaginative, healthy GWM. Anywhere in Sonoma Co. Daytimes only. ☎ 7632

Latin Boyfriend

Attractive, 40yr, old blue eyed, HIV-, bisexual, 6'1", moustache, intelligent, endowed. Not into bars. Into male bonding. ☎ 7632

Need Temporary husband?

Cute, sweet, sexy, blond, bare 5'8" 160lbs. for sex friends. Available, now call me! ☎ 7633

Indoor/ Outdoor Slave

Meticulous Master (tall, slim, fit, hot, 45) seeks submissive servant for ongoing garden work and domestic, sexual service. Serious replies only. Will train. ☎ 7716

Hey, Faggot

Strip naked and get on your knees, cocksucker, verbal abuse, humiliation and safe orders to follow for masculine slender bodied guys 18-39 by slim WM 42 with 7 cut inches. ☎ 7717

Seek Top On Bottom's

49 old seek white man only. Like to go out on dates. Love-sex. I am Black and I am bi. ☎ 7718

Submissive Boy To Service You

I am dominant, forceful man to make me suck his cock & fuck my mouth! Also like getting fucked, spanked, slapped around, verbal abuse, leather, uniforms, role playing, toys, etc. ☎ 7719

Playful Sexbuddy Wanted

GWM, 35, 6'1", 190lbs. Handsome, masculine, gym goer with big heart and quick wit seeks vers. for long sessions. We're creative, neg, hung. Italian, Irish, 69 A+ ☎ 7720

Palo Alto GAM 40 5'11" 185 Btm

ISO a husky top with average endowment to orally satisfy. Ub under 55 & living on the Peninsula. ☎ 7721

Cock Slave Wanted

I want a cock slave who will suck my dick for hours/days. Also into fucking, fl, w, bondage, etc. Have sling, bondage bars, toys, etc. Take care of my dick, I'll take care of your needs. ☎ 7722

Wanted: Asian Or Latin For Fun

Are you 30-45, in good shape, interested in early morning or lunchtime hot sex sessions and friendship w/ healthy, GWM, 45, 5'8", 145. No LTR. SF only. ☎ 7723

Not A Pornstar

Like everyone else in these ads. Just average looking bear-like WM bottom. Looking for Asian/Pacific islander top. Willing to try everything. 6'3" 280lbs of real man. ☎ 7724

Showoff In Sonoma County?

I'd love to videotape you jacking-off. Not commercial, recreational. Your place or mine, daytime only. Me: middle-aged, nice looking, fun, healthy, generous. ☎ 7725

A1 Oral Service- Delivered

GWM, 35, HIV-, 6', 180#, handsome, delivers complete oral service to trim, trim guys who really dig getting sucked off. Your place. No reciprocation. HIV- ☎ 7726

Looking For Hung JO Addict

Use my face for target practice. Straight mature WM wants to watch you go up close feel you. Hot cock splatter my face. Multi-shooter a real plus. ☎ 7727

I Want Pussy!

Boy pussy, that is. Let me pull your pants down, spread your butt cheeks, spit, chew, finger and then fuck your hole, HIV- in shape only. ☎ 7728

Well Hung Aussie Men

and other musc., slim guys get your big cocks & balls sucked by eager cocksucker w/ talented hot mouth & tongue. Nuts about down under studs! ☎ 7729

Amateur Stripper Wanted

For a small party. Audience are 4 Asian in their early 30's. You are muscular and like to be touched. Your compensation is 3 hot bus and a blow job. ☎ 7730

4Skin 4Play

Big uncult cockhead available for fun and games and more. I am 45, hairy, slim, 5'10", bearded, scholarly. You are a shapely 20-35. Oral or bottom. ☎ 7731

Btm Middlewage Wets Younger Top

Bottom, 50, looks 40, seeking younger top to totally worship head to toes. Me: 5'6", 130, dark hair & eyes, hairy, HIV-. You: hairy, big (esp. biceps), let's play! ☎ 7732

Thick Black Bushes

Let me bury my face in your thick bush while I suck your dick. Me: GWM, 56, 6', 165. You: Latino, Middle-Eastern, or Italian. Very hairy preferred. ☎ 7733

Our Turn

I've been looking for Puerto Rican, Latin, Black bottom who like it wet and natural. Me: 81k, 6'1", 175, goatee, handsome, hung 9. Let me open you up. ☎ 7734

Naked Driver Your Ad #7245

Into your scene, would like to be a naked passenger stroking my hard cock. Exhibitionist likes to get bare ass. Naked in public. Let's connect. ☎ 7735

Buzz Your Ad #7136

Yeah, I would really love to have you shave it all off from head to toe. Body, balls, crotch etc. Me: GWM tattoos. Let's connect. ☎ 7736

ISO Anglo Males Over 18yrs.Old

Strait bi or gay, serious head practice till I we get it right. ☎ 7625

Pig Bk Bott

Sks top dom ave verbal top + raunch kink slave + uninhibited sex + cock & ball sex. Avail wkend & some eve. ☎ 7737

Big Men

G8M, 5'11", 250lbs, big chest, hung, seeks, stocky, chubby men for uninhibited sex. Must be discreet. ☎ 7814

Ready For Some Exercise?

Versatile 26, 6'2", 170lbs Mexican, seeks good looking 23-35, h/wt prop, versatile top guy for long sweaty fuck sessions. Tall and hung a plus. ☎ 7815

Boysish Asian Bottom

Cute boysish Asian 53" seeks gym toned smooth WM or AM top under 40. I have a firm butt and strong legs. Blonde a plus. ☎ 7816

I Need It Sucked-Wife Won't

WM, 40's, big + cut, needs sucking off in Castro - M, T, Wed only, days. Like it long & slow, prefer 40's, + any race, no weirdness. ☎ 7817

I Want Your Big Dick

Looking for a few good men who are incredibly huge to service. If you are gym-toned, 20-45 and love to be sucked-off, give a call. I'm fit, ready, & able. ☎ 7818

Big Muscles!! Big Fun!!

G3M, 35, handsome muscular and HIV-, 5'10", 210# looking for hot, safe times with muscular bodybuilder types, 25-50yrs. Any race, but muscles a must! Let's oil up and flex together. ☎ 7819

Asian Bottoms Come And Get It

Let me tongue & cock fuck your hot Asian ass. 36yr GWM, Italian neg. Great looks & body. I want to be your top. Call Now. ☎ 7820

Velvet Throat Shaft Massage

For Asian, Latino, Black who need a full body erotic, sensual massage. Me: big, very masculine, very strong, str8 acting, GWM, mid 40's, smooth, 25-40 only; lean, trim body a must. ☎ 7821

Handsome Muscular Italian Hung

8-12 would like to meet hot top to bottom guys for hot fucking n sucking. Let's lock into a 69, then fuck each other. ☎ 7823

Playmate For Big Guy

WM, 41, 6'0", 215, blue eyes, beard looking for husky to heavy guys for occasional fun. You: 30-50, facial hair, like to kiss and touch. ☎ 7824

SKG Black Top

Shave head kinky white sub seeks dominant aggressive kinky black top daddy into heavy duty butt play, tit play, also b/d, sm. ☎ 7825

Hairy muscular Handsome 30+

looking for mature SF GWM. Odd jobs for your profit. Wheels needed. Hairy arms, legs, chest, crotch essential. Credentials appreciated. ☎ 7826

Cowboy Wanted

Looking for country & western type of guy to attend the Reno Ride in mid June. Other interests include rodeo, outdoor activities and fun times. ☎ 7827

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Hole Patrol

27yo fit, seeks bottoms with loose floppy holes for stretching, punching, and exploring. Open to all body types, ages, races. Safe sex only. A+ for facial hair. ☎ 7738

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Dominance, control, humiliation, with no reciprocation. I crave all of above from any masculine men. I'm white, 5'6", 160lbs, but you needn't be. ☎ 7740

There's one in every crowd

by Gregg Shapiro

Bands such as Suede, Placebo and Culture Club can lay claim to having at least one openly gay or lesbian band member. The bands Skunk Anansie, Sleater-Kinney, Frogpond, Imperial Teen and Luscious Jackson can say the same thing.

The Hot Rock by Pacific Northwest-based Sleater-Kinney (Kill Rock Stars) continues in the same vein as the trio's two previous critically lauded discs, *Call the Doctor* and *Dig Me Out*. Carrie Brownstein, Corin Tucker and Janet Weiss (the same line-up as *Dig Me Out*) have a sound that is both referential (I continue to hear strains of early '80s indie punk in their songs) and innovative (they emerged from the '90s riot grunge scene). Highlights on this solid 13-track disc include "Start Together," "Burn, Don't Freeze!," "Banned from the End of the World," "Get Up," "The Size of Our Love," and the spellbinding "Don't Talk Like" and "A Quarter To Three."

A little bit campier than Sleater-Kinney, Imperial Teen follow up their 1996 debut disc *Seasick* with the equally exuberant *What Is Not To Love* (Slash). As openly gay Roddy Bottum sings in "Lipstick," "Why you gotta be so proud/I'm the one with lipstick on." And he does it over a slamming beat with electric guitars wailing. "Yoo Hoo" wants to be this year's "Song 2" (by Blur), and it still could be. Other recommended cuts include "Open Season," "Year Of The Tan," "Hooray," and "Birthday Girl." There is so much to love here.

On *Safe Ride Home* (Columbia), Heidi Phillips and the other members of Frogpond could sure use some of Sleater-Kinney's ferocious energy or Imperial Teen's sense of fun. As it stands, tracks such as "World Crash," "I Did," "Fighter," "22," and "Get Paid" are pleasant enough, but it takes more than pleasanties to make it in a constantly shifting and very unpredictable major-label world. Something tells me Frogpond is a live performance/word-of-mouth unit. If that's the case, then I'll



Skunk Anansie

have to reserve final judgment until I see them on stage.

Having already seen Skunk Anansie on stage, I find it easy to understand why they have built a reputation as a band to see. Lead vocalist Skin is a sight to behold,

bouncing around on stage while wailing into the microphone. Following the unexpected danceclub success of the remixed "Weep" from their previous disc *Stoosh*, Skunk Anansie was ready to veer off into the new directions

they've taken on *Post Orgasmic Chill* (Virgin). Far more diverse than their first two major-label discs, *Post Orgasmic Chill*'s dozen tracks will take the listener on a ride that is the equivalent of a musical roller coaster. Powerhouse tracks include "Charlie Big Potato," "On My Hotel T.V.," "The Skank Heads," "You'll Follow Me Down," and especially the album's centerpiece "Lately," "Secretly," and "Good Things Don't Always Come To You." Throughout the disc, Skunk Anansie never loses their identity, remaining true to their original vision.

On their third full-length disc, *Electric Honey* (Capitol/Grand Royal), Luscious Jackson continues their explorations into different styles of dance music — the wonderful "Nervous Breakthrough," "Ladyfingers," "Christine," "Alien Lover," "Summer Daze," "Country's A Callin'," and "Space Diva," propelled by Kate Schellenbach's forceful drumming. "Fantastic Fabulous," with guest vocalist Deborah Harry, is the disc's least electrifying moment, and is easy to overlook. ▼

Loud Family values

by Gregg Shapiro

This column celebrates the family in all of its various forms, including chosen, biological, and especially musical.

The Loud Family, the band, takes its name from the seminal PBS documentary about a family called Loud. On their most recent album *Days for Days* (Alias), The Loud Family does occasionally get loud, but it's all in the name of their unique pop-rock style. The disc's eighteen tracks alternate between instrumental snippets and full-fledged songs. Highlights include "Dece-Pression," "Mozart Sonatas," "Businessmen Are Okay," and the eight minute-plus "Sister Sleep."

The Lighthouse Family (no relation) creates a subtle dance groove, similar to Seal's, that makes sitting still nearly impossible. It's especially present on "Raincloud," "Question Of Faith," "High," "Lifted," and "Restless." They also have a way with pretty ballads, which you can hear on "Postcard From Heaven" and "Sun In The Night."

The real-life sister and brother team of Sarah Bettens and Gert Bettens front the band K's Choice. K's Choice had something of a major hit a while back with the single "Not An Addict."

Cocoon Crash (Sony 550/Epic) is their follow-up disc, and it's pretty good. Sarah still kind of sounds like Amy Ray of the Indigo Girls. I'm not sure why K's Choice isn't bigger than they are (read: cult status).

Lisa Coleman and Wendy Melvoin, who used to be a part of Prince's family, have released a disc under the moniker Girl Brothers (WDM). After releasing a handful of discs as Wendy and Lisa, it would seem that they (and perhaps their fans) were ready for something different. Girl Brothers, the band and the album, do deliver something different and very cool. Co-produced by Tchad Blake, Melvoin and Coleman, the album has the unique sound qualities we've come to expect from Wendy and Lisa, as processed by Blake's distinctive touch. High-

lights include "Reaching One," "I Will," "Love & Trouble," "If I Were Brave," "Let's Say," "Jonathan" (for Melvoin's late brother), and their cover of "I've Got No Strings."

Of the five members of The Nields, three of them (Katryna, Nerissa and David) actually have Nields as their last name. The other two (drummer Dave Hower and guitarist Dave Chalfant, who share the same first name), are just good sports. A harder-rocking (although not that hard) version of the Roches, The Nields' new album *Play* (Zoe/Rounder) is every bit as infectious as their previous one, *Gotta Get Over Greta*. Swell harmonies and tight musicianship gives *Play* its undeniable energy, especially on songs such as "Georgia O," "Snowman," "Last Kisses," "Friday At The Circle K," and "Tomorrowland."

A family affair if there ever was one, *The McGarrigle Hour* (Rykodisc) by Kate and Anna McGarrigle (and their extraordinary extended family, which includes Linda Ronstadt and Emmylou Harris, among others) is simply amazing. From the opening track, written by Kate's ex-husband Loudon Wainwright (he's also the father of their children Rufus and Martha, who sang and contributed original songs to the project) to the McGarrigle sisters' originals (such as "Talk To Me of Mendocino" and "Cool River," to name a few) and the multitude of covers in-between (by the likes of Cole Porter, Irving Berlin and Stephen Foster), this is one of the most timeless albums released in 1998, or any year for that matter.

Speaking of Loudon Wainwright, *Attempted Mustache* from 1973 and *Unrequited* from 1975 (both on Columbia/Legacy/Common Chord) are wonderful history lessons made that much better for the inclusion of previously unavailable bonus tracks. Fans of his son Rufus may gain an even better understanding of the young Wainwright, and should also find amusement in the song "Rufus Is A Tit Man" (a song about nursing), which is on *Unrequited* in two versions (one for each breast, I guess). ▼

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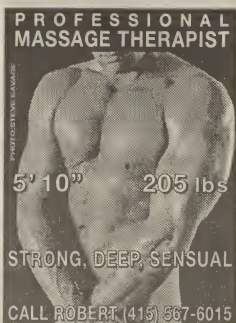
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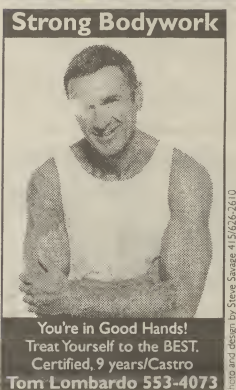
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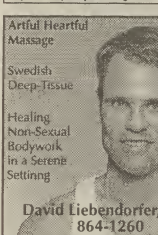
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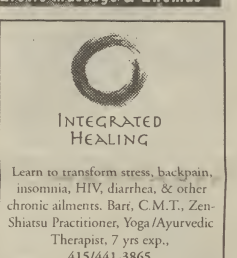
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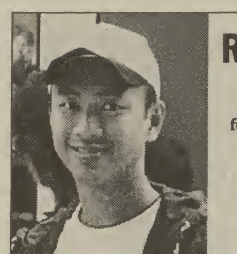
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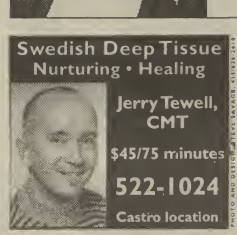
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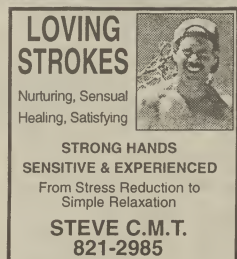
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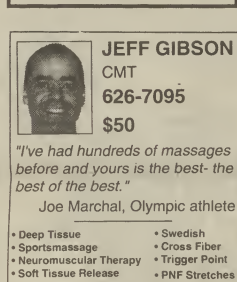
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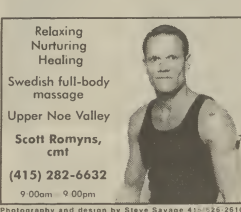
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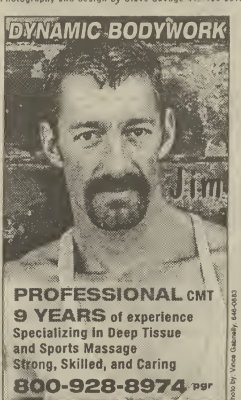
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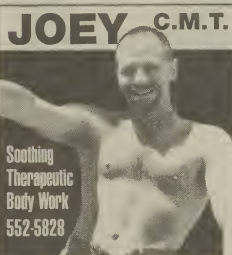
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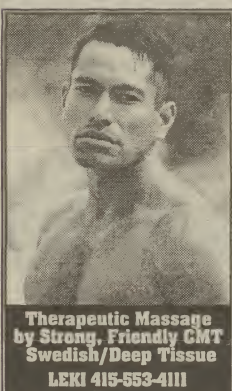
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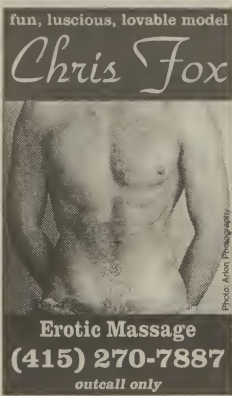
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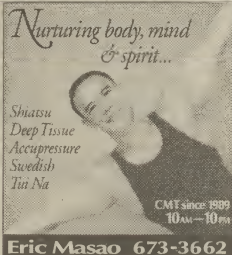
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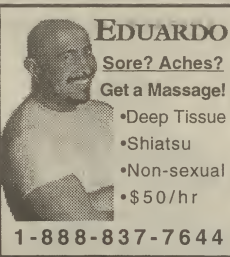
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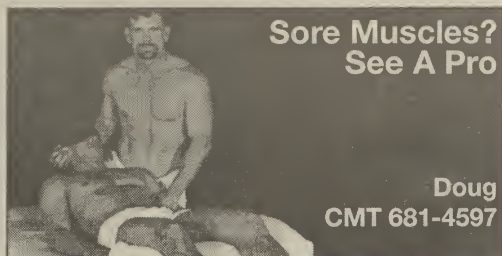
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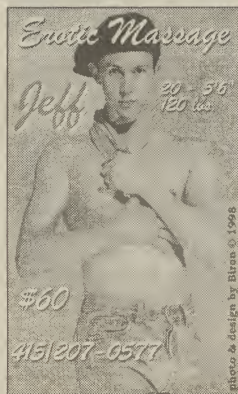
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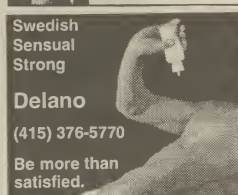
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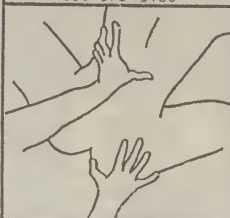
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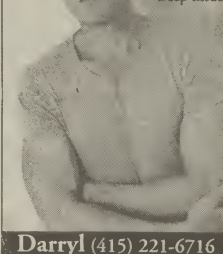
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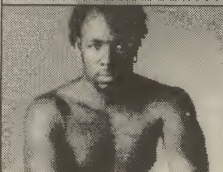
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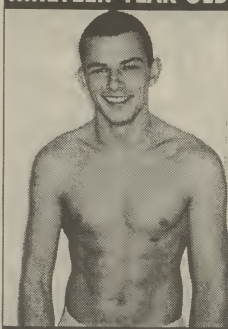
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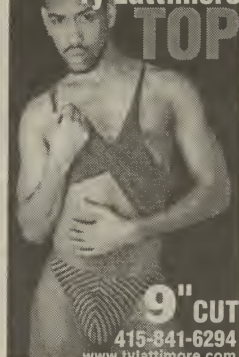
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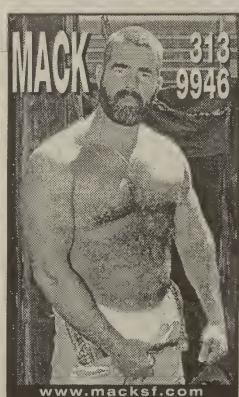
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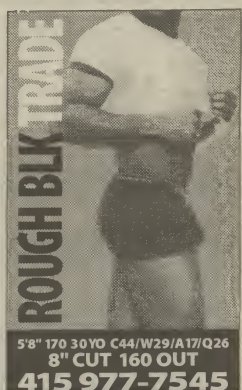
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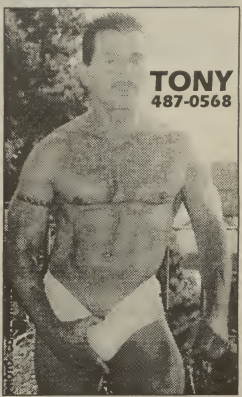
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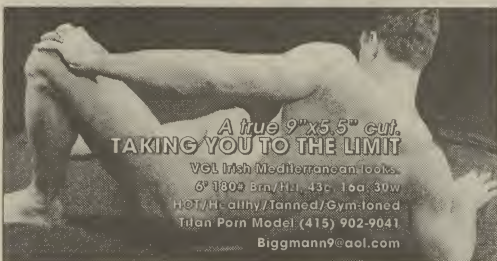
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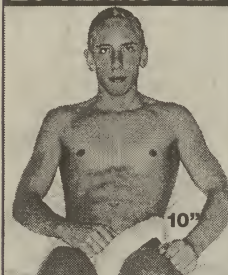
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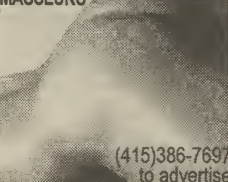
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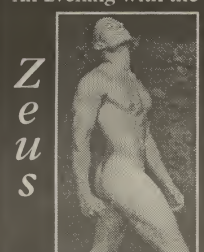
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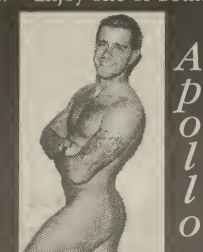
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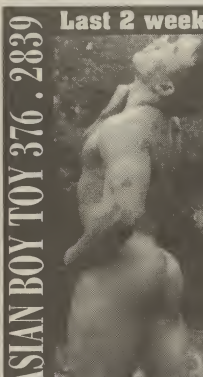
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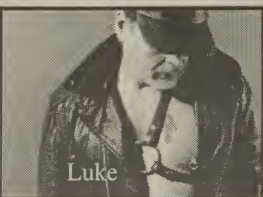
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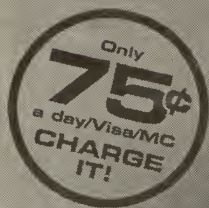
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